



Board of Christian Social Action NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME

The Board of Christian Social Action (BOCSA) presents the inaugural issue of its social justice newsletter. This church has had a long history of supporting social justice causes. With this newsletter we hope to shed light on some of the individuals who carrying on the work, while sharing info we need to know so that we all can make informed choices.

*If any one of us
is suffering we
are all suffering.*

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PREAMBLE of the CONSTITUTION of the UNITED STATES

"We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

A Tribute to Elijah Cummings



On October 17, 2019, the United States, and Black America in particular, lost a soldier on the front lines in the battle for justice. "As a devoted statesman to Baltimore and the civil rights movement, Rep. Cummings was among the most passionate and spirited members of congress. He demanded justice on every front and never shied away from standing up for the most vulnerable," said Derrick Johnson, President and CEO, NAACP. "From his days in the Maryland General Assembly to his key role as chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Congressman Cummings dedicated his life to combating oppression in all its forms — and holding oppressors accountable."

Cummings served in the Maryland House for 14 years and in the House of Representatives for 23 years. He was a proud native and member of the Baltimore community, seeking always to improve his district by taking legislative action and advocating for his hometown even when attacked by the President of the United States.

Rep. Cummings served as the Chair of the Committee of Oversight and Government Reform in 2019, gaining national attention for his leadership and boldness in exposing inequity and abuse of power by the Federal Government and rogue economic interests. He dedicated his life to fighting injustice, from his childhood days when he integrated a local swimming pool to his esteemed career in Congress, Elijah Cummings was truly a champion for civil rights and civil liberties.

STILL IN THE STRUGGLE: John Lewis

John Lewis has lived at the forefront of American history for the past half-century. From being the youngest speaker at the 1963 March on Washington to serving more than 30 years in Congress, Lewis has helped shape civil rights in America for decades. Congressman Lewis was recently diagnosed with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Please keep this civil rights icon in prayer.



Legislative Update

Comprehensive Criminal Justice Reform: The First Step Act

begins the process of sentencing and prison reform and has passed the House and Senate and was signed by the President.

The Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization HR 1585 has passed the House and is awaiting approval in the Senate.

Pay Equity Bill HR 7 has passed the House and is awaiting approval in the Senate.

Contact your senators and urge them to vote for these crucial acts to protect our civil rights and liberties.

Washington DC Admission Act HR 51 for DC Statehood has been introduced in the House.

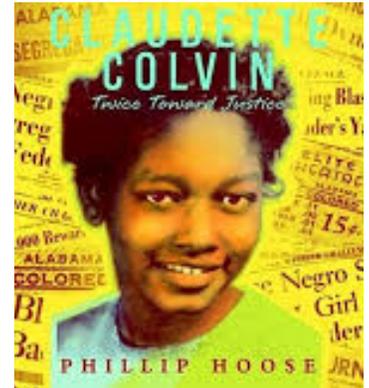
Contact your representatives to show your support to Rep. Norton, who introduced the bill, or urge them to support full voting rights for DC residents.

Before Rosa Parks, there was Claudette Colvin

Most people think of Rosa Parks as the first person to refuse to give up their seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama. There were actually several women who came before her, one of whom was Claudette Colvin.

It was March 2, 1955, when the fifteen-year-old schoolgirl refused to move to the back of the bus, nine months *before* Rosa Parks' stand that launched the Montgomery bus boycott. Claudette had been studying Black leaders like Harriet Tubman in her segregated school, those conversations had led to discussions around the current day Jim Crow laws they were all experiencing. When the bus driver ordered Claudette to get up, she refused, **"It felt like Sojourner Truth was on one side pushing me down, and Harriet Tubman was on the other side of me pushing me down. I couldn't get up."**

Claudette Colvin's stand didn't stop there. Arrested and thrown in jail, she was one of four women who challenged the segregation law in court. If *Browder v. Gayle* became the court case that successfully overturned bus segregation laws in both Montgomery and Alabama, why has Claudette's story been largely forgotten? At the time, the NAACP and other Black organizations felt Rosa Parks made a better icon for the movement than a teenager. As an adult with the right look, Rosa Parks was also the secretary of the NAACP, and was both well-known and respected – people would associate her with the middle class and that would attract support for the cause. But the struggle to end segregation was often fought by young people, more than half of which were women. We salute Claudette Colvin, and unsung heroes and sheroes like her, who had the courage to stand, and even sit, for their convictions.



A Message from our Minister Reverend Brandon Harris

Social Justice is at the heart of our faith. Micah 6:8 states,
He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Now more than ever the world needs the witness of the Church. Whether it is around Black Lives Matter, Poverty, Immigration, the student debt crisis; the church is called to speak to the needs of the world. This is our heritage as Congregationalists we have long been champions of justice and it is time for us to raise our voices anew and to join God in the work of justice, love, and mercy.