



## Quaker Voice on Juneteenth 2022

The legislative advocacy of Quaker Voice takes place against the backdrop of the history of African Americans in the state of Washington. Juneteenth gives me an opportunity, as clerk of the Quaker Voice Board, to look at the ways we are addressing that history in our work.

The state of Washington was built by and for white men. In the 1840s, white settlers traveled west on the Oregon Trail bringing racist attitudes with them. "The great majority of these new [white Northwesterners] simply wanted to create an all-white society free of the racial problems threatening the cause an American civil war."<sup>1</sup> Hostility and legal restrictions kept the number of African Americans in Washington low until job opportunities opened in the war industry during World War II. Redlining and restrictive covenants kept Blacks strongly segregated through the 1990s.<sup>2</sup>

That history appears every day in the lives of African Americans in Washington state now. Blacks and Native Americans (the original victims of white supremacy here) are disproportionately jailed.<sup>3</sup> Both groups are over-represented among the homeless.<sup>4</sup> Black families pay higher percentages of their income for housing than white families.<sup>5</sup> Their children more likely to be in foster care.<sup>6</sup> The communities of Seattle's south side are exposed to more than their share of pollution.<sup>7</sup> The first step in the state's ten-year plan for reducing poverty is to "Understand structural racism and historical trauma and take action to undo their harmful effects in state policy and programs."<sup>8</sup>

Quaker Voice is working for a state of Washington where everyone's potential may be reached and where we all live in dignity. In our work on prisons and the legal system as well as housing and environmental justice, we are working towards that goal.

Susan Cozzens  
Quaker Voice Board Clerk

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<sup>1</sup> See "[Black in Oregon.](#)" Washington was part of the original Oregon Territory.

<sup>2</sup> See [Seattle's Race and Segregation Story in Maps 1920-2020 - Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project \(washington.edu\)](#).

<sup>3</sup> [Washington State profile | Prison Policy Initiative](#)

<sup>4</sup> [See how Seattle's homelessness crisis stacks up across the country and region \(seattletimes.com\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> [WLIHA Affordable Housing Report 2020 Web.pdf](#)

<sup>6</sup> [The History of Racism In Foster Care In Washington State \(wachildrenandfamilies.org\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [People of color hardest hit by air pollution from nearly all sources | UW News \(washington.edu\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Poverty Reduction Work Group | Dismantle Poverty in Washington](#)