Twitter Thread by Bailey Loosemore



Bailey Loosemore
@bloosemore

THREAD: Today, @courierjournal published Beyond Breonna, a series on systemic racism and how Louisville can end it.

It was spurred by the death of Breonna Taylor. But these issues have existed for generations. People are tired of the same

As @FBruceWilliams said: "It kills me when people ask, 'Well, what do you want?' ... Why is it so difficult for people to believe (a Black community) wants for its residents the same opportunities, services, convenience and quality in their neighborhood?"

https://t.co/Rv9XUGHv49

The series covers disparities in health, education, housing, employment and criminal justice.

We start with health because Black people are dying younger in Louisville - from homicides, chronic illnesses and now the coronavirus.

https://t.co/BGf0SpMrt8

Environmental conditions - such as access to healthy food, quality housing and clean air - contribute to higher rates of illness in Black communities.

And disparities in treatment have made Black patients mistrust the system.

https://t.co/BGf0SpMrt8

Alisha Beatty had 7 miscarriages before she said doctors took her seriously and looked into the cause.

"I was always told, 'It's an act of God, these things happen.'"

https://t.co/BGf0SpMrt8

We move on to education because it's supposed to be the "great equalizer."

In Louisville, it still isn't, @HayesGardner reported.

https://t.co/JhaWtE6V8n

“Everything we do — our policies, our procedures, everything — has to have a focus on racial equity because we're seeing the same achievement gaps nationwide that aren't changing." @JCPSSuper

https://t.co/JhaWtE6V8n

Education can lead to better jobs which can lead to better housing and opportunities.

In Louisville, just 36% of Black households own their home, while 70% of white households do.

https://t.co/BQ8RNJgqGh

Instead of improving, disparities in housing are getting worse.

Black home-ownership rates fell between 2000 and 2017. And Black people are still evicted at higher rates than white people - including Kwmisha Adams, a mother of four.

https://t.co/BQ8RNJgqGh

Kwmisha Adams was evicted from her apartment in August amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"What hurts me the most, it's not me that I have to think about, it's four kids. ... I'm already living in government assistance. How much lower can a person feel?"

https://t.co/BQ8RNJgqGh

Then we get to the criminal justice story.

This one is hard.

Kris Smith, who @HayesGardner featured, was shot and killed Friday as this series was awaiting publication.

https://t.co/qvIJO2OaIj

Kris Smith was called a hero for stopping a deadly situation.

But he sat in jail for multiple years awaiting two trials on felony gun possession, eventually taking a plea.

“You get so tired of being in there, locked up, you’ll take damn near anything."

https://t.co/qvIJO2OaIj

In Kentucky, Black people are nearly 3 times more likely to be in jail than white people. And from 2017 through October 2020, Black people made up 43.5% of arrests by the LMPD, though they make up 22% of the city's population.

https://t.co/qvIJO2OaIj

Criminal records limit a person's job opportunities.

But as @HayesGardner shows with the story of William Isaac, the lack of opportunities sometimes leads people to commit crimes.

https://t.co/Q8MctcY2EI

In Louisville, 18% of Black people with a high school degree are unemployed, compared to 6% of white people.

“If you don’t have any hope, and you’re discouraged, then, I don’t know. You’re just gonna do things that you shouldn’t do," Isaac said.

https://t.co/Q8MctcY2EI

Unequal access to high-paying jobs and home-ownership prevents Black people from establishing wealth, which in turn can prevent them from taking financial risks - such as opening a business.

In 2020, 2.4% of Louisville businesses are Black-owned.

https://t.co/S3tpBVNt20

"Black people can be very creative and innovative with ideas and skills and abilities, but don’t have the capital to venture with, and if they do, it’s going to be more to sustain livelihood than to be a risk-taker and try a business venture." @kefieldssr

https://t.co/S3tpBVNt20

As you read these stories, notice the themes.

The coronavirus is deepening disparities, giving these issues even more urgency.

But Louisville isn't naive about how to solve them. People know what needs to be done.

The question is: Do we have the will?

https://t.co/oRs5f6IBPJ

.@HiJackTheDay told me about research he did in 2015 following the police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson.

People wanted to know how Louisville could prevent something similar from happening here.

5 years later, little has changed.

https://t.co/oRs5f6IBPJ

A common reason from those in power is that they don't have the resources to try solutions toward ending systemic racism.

But community members say, in many cases, the obstacle isn't funding — it's a matter of priority and personal will.

https://t.co/oRs5f6IBPJ

"If you're white, you don't need to tell a Black person change is slow. Because we see from our lived experience, when white people facilitate changes on their behalf, the shit can change pretty rapidly." @HiJackTheDay

https://t.co/oRs5f6IBPJ

Want proof that Louisville knows how to reduce racial disparities?

Here are 50 potential solutions.

https://t.co/ND4jJI1Wb8

And if you want to get involved yourself, here are dozens of places already doing great work.

https://t.co/o10nF81t4c

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