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OCTOBER 2020, ISSUE 2

# Racial Justice Initiative Newsletter



THE TEMPLE JUDEA

## RACIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

במקום שאין אנשים, השתדל להיות איש

In a place where no one is acting human, strive to be human.

Pirkei Avot 2:5

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# Current Events

## **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**

Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg passed away on Erev Rosh Hashana. Justice Ginsburg was the second woman, and the first Jewish woman to serve on the Supreme Court. She was a champion of equal rights, a feminist icon, and is now the first woman to lay in State. Over her decades-long career as a lawyer which preceded her time on the U.S. Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg shaped the fight for women's rights. She appeared before the Supreme Court six times, and won five of the gender discrimination cases she argued. In one of her most notable cases, Justice Ginsburg represented a recently widowed man who wished to claim survivor's benefits after his wife had passed. His claim was denied under a clause that stated in order for a man to claim survivors benefits, he had to have been receiving support from his wife at the time of her death. Justice Ginsburg argued that because this same clause does not apply to widowed women, it was unconstitutional. She won this case, and others like it, paving the way for society to begin to view women as equal to men in the eyes of the legal system. The political battle to replace Justice Ginsburg is hotly contested as we are just weeks away from a presidential election.

## **Jacob Blake / Kenosha Wisconsin**

On August 23, Jacob Blake was shot in the back seven times by police officer Rusten Shesky. Blake, a 29 year old African American man was shot in front of three of his young sons, as he was leaning into his car. The incident left Blake paralyzed from the waist down, and he also sustained injuries to his kidney, liver, and stomach, and had to have most of his small intestine and colon removed. Subsequent protests erupted in Kenosha, that left two people dead and a third injured at the hands of counter protester, Illinois teenager Kyle Rittenhouse.

## **Dijon Kizzee**

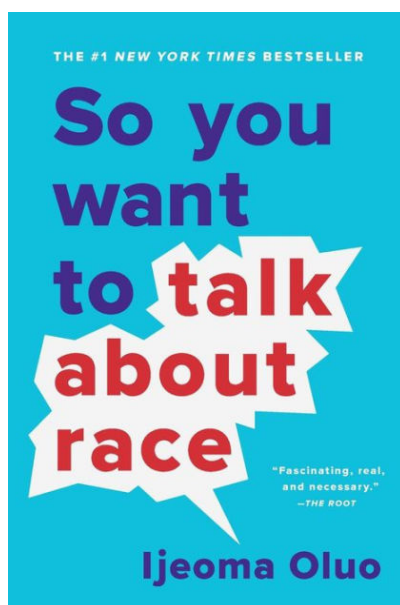
LAPD Officers stopped 29 year old Dijon Kizzee on August 31, for an unspecified "code violation" while riding his bicycle in a south Los Angeles neighborhood. (Later, sheriff deputy's stated Kizzee was stopped for riding his bicycle on the wrong side of the street). An altercation broke out when Dijon Kizzee attempted to flee the scene. Police shot him 15 times for allegedly reaching for a handgun. An independent autopsy found that Dijon Kizzee was bleeding out while the officers who shot him waited for back up to arrive.

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# Upcoming Events

As part of our Uncomfortable Conversations Series, Rabbi Rosenstein will moderate a two-part discussion of *So You Want to Talk About Race*, by Ijeoma Oluo. Join us on Tuesdays, October 13 & 27, 7:30pm. Register for the discussion [HERE](#).

Uncomfortable Conversations will be meeting approximately twice a month, on Tuesday evenings at 7:30 from October through June 2021. We hope to create a community of conversation in our exploration of race and racism through offering a series of challenging and sometimes provocative films, books, magazine articles and other media. Each meeting will be moderated by a member of our clergy. We hope that participants will want to participate regularly as we learn together, and for those who can't make that kind of commitment, please feel free to participate with us whenever you can.



Here is a list of upcoming dates and events:

10/8/20: **Heschel/King Forum** - Reimagining Public Safety and Justice. [REGISTER HERE](#)

10/13/20: **Uncomfortable Conversations: So You Want to Talk About Race** (a book by Ijeoma Oluo) (Part 1) [REGISTER HERE](#)

10/27/20: **Uncomfortable Conversations: So You Want to Talk About Race** ( a book by Ijeoma Oluo) (Part 2) [REGISTER HERE](#)

11/10/20: **Uncomfortable Conversations: Selma** (a film directed by Ava Duvernay) [REGISTER HERE](#)

11/17/20: **"Uncomfortable Conversations" Panel: Housing Inequity and Race in LA - A Look Back, and a Way Forward**The panel will include Dr. Josh Sides, Professor of California History at CSUN and author of "L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present", Faisal Roble, Chief Equity Officer with the L.A. City Planning Department, and others.

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# Educational Resources

## Movie: *RBG*

"At the age of 85, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has developed a lengthy legal legacy while becoming an unexpected pop culture icon. But the unique personal journey of her rise to the nation's highest court has been largely unknown, even to some of her biggest fans – until now. *RBG* explores Ginsburg's life and career."

Watch [HERE](#).



## Movie: *Selma*

"Although the Civil Rights Act of 1964 legally desegregated the South, discrimination was still rampant in certain areas, making it very difficult for blacks to register to vote. In 1965, an Alabama city became the battleground in the fight for suffrage. Despite violent opposition, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (David Oyelowo) and his followers pressed forward on an epic march from Selma to Montgomery, and their efforts culminated in President Lyndon Johnson signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965."

With the election around the corner and the most recent March on Washington, *Selma* is the perfect way to reflect on voting rights. Who has the right to vote and who does not? The Civil Rights Movement is over, but not all of our citizens have access to the polls. Reminder that *Selma* will also be discussed as part of the Uncomfortable Conversations Series.



Watch on Hulu or Amazon Prime.

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# Educational Resources

## **Book: Our Time is Now by Stacey Abrams**

"Stacey Abrams is a New York Times bestselling author, serial entrepreneur, nonprofit CEO and political leader. After serving for eleven years in the Georgia House of Representatives, seven as Democratic Leader. In 2018, Abrams became the Democratic nominee for Governor of Georgia, winning more votes than any other Democrat in the state's history. Abrams was the first black woman to become the gubernatorial nominee for a major party in the United States, and she was the first black woman and first Georgian to deliver a Response to the State of the Union. In the wake of the 2018 election, Abrams launched Fair Fight Action and Fair Fight 2020 to defend voting rights. She also launched Fair Count to ensure accuracy in the 2020 Census and greater participation in civic engagement, and the Southern Economic Advancement Project, a public policy initiative to broaden economic power and build equity in the South. She previously founded the New Georgia Project, which has helped register hundreds of thousands of Georgians."

Get it on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, or Bookshop.org (to support local bookstores).



## **Podcast: Code Switch**

"What's CODE SWITCH? It's the fearless conversations about race that you've been waiting for! Hosted by journalists of color, our podcast tackles the subject of race head-on. We explore how it impacts every part of society — from politics and pop culture to history, sports and everything in between. This podcast makes ALL OF US part of the conversation — because we're all part of the story." Listen on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, or NPR.



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# Educational Resources

## **Article: Should The Supreme Court Matter So Much?**

The Supreme Court was created to serve as a body of government that was independent from our two political parties. When the SCOTUS was established, the founding fathers intended the Judicial Branch to be the least important body of our government. The idea was that the people would elect a president, and the president would appoint a Supreme Court Justice with the approval of the senate. The Supreme Court has the power of Judicial Review, which means that the House and Senate can pass a bill, and the President then signs that bill into law. Using the power of Judicial review, the Supreme Court can say that said law is unconstitutional for any number of reasons, and strike it down meaning the law would never come to pass. Read more about the SCOTUS and its importance below:

[The New York Times - Should The Supreme Court Matter So Much?](#)



## Where to Donate

The world is still in the midst of battling the COVID-19 pandemic, and many around the world are suffering physically, mentally, and of course financially. Donate to those hit hardest by the pandemic through the two nonprofits below:

[World Vision Coronavirus Emergency Relief](#)

[God's Love We Deliver](#)



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# Take Action

## Register to Vote

The election is only a month away! Use the link below to check your voter registration status, and register to vote. <https://registertovote.ca.gov/>

Additionally, if you are interested in working at the polls this election season, find more information using the link below. Typically, poll workers are senior citizens and with the pandemic still incredibly widespread it is not advisable for older people to work the polls.

<https://lacounty.gov/government/elections-voting/become-a-pollworker/>

## Vote YES on Measure J!

In unprecedented times, we need structural change. Re-Imagine L.A. County is a coalition of advocates, community organizations, and neighbors supporting Measure J to prioritize health, housing, and jobs. For decades, L.A. County's budget has directed money away from Black, Brown, and low-income communities and allocated it in ways that negatively impact these same communities. It's time to change that.

### Measure J will:

- 1) Permanently allocate at least 10% of existing locally-controlled revenues to be directed to community investment and alternatives to incarceration.
- 2) Increase funding for community-based youth development programs.
- 3) Provide career training and jobs to low-income residents focusing on jobs that support the implementation of the "Alternatives to Incarceration" workgroup recommendations, especially construction jobs for the expansion of affordable & supportive housing, and a decentralized system of care.
- 4) Create access to capital for small minority-owned businesses, with a focus on Black-owned businesses.
- 5) Provide rent assistance and housing vouchers to those at-risk of losing their housing, or without stable housing and provide capital funding for affordable housing, transitional housing and supportive housing.
- 6) Increase funding for community-based restorative justice programs
- 7) Increase life-affirming community-based counseling and mental health and wellness services.

**\*\*MEASURE J WILL NOT RAISE TAXES:** The money used for Measure J is already part of the LA County budget.