Melissa A. Little

**Impacting Your Community During A Time of Social Unrest**

The rise of social media has helped shed light on social injustices in America that impact the poor, communities of color, and members of the LGBT community. Most recently, there have been several incidents that have received widespread attention revealing an unfair criminal justice system. These incidents have led to social unrest and amplified racial tension in America. As attorneys, we are able to play a critical role in shaping our justice system, and making a difference in our communities. Many attorneys from across the nation have begun forming groups to address issues of police misconduct, and the killing of unarmed black men and women in America. In fact, the National Bar Association and the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights have recently launched a national program to help protect and safeguard the rights of those engaged in peaceful demonstrations.¹ This initiative includes a release of materials to help ensure that demonstrators are aware of their first amendment right to protest, while also providing legal support to those detained and arrested while protesting.

As members of the legal profession it is important that we fight to protect our laws, and ensure that all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, class, gender or sexual orientation, are equally protected under the law. In order to be effective advocates, it is imperative to first learn about the issues. This includes understanding the root of the problem, and also engaging in meaningful conversation with members affected by the injustice. Because there are so many activist groups and programs that already exist, you can help implement change by volunteering with one of these organizations. Attorneys also have the resources to create their own programs by using social media platforms to inform others about the issues and ways they can get involved, or working with their local or state bar association to develop programs or initiatives.

If you are involved in any program that is working to improve social injustices in America, the Minorities in the Profession Committee wants to hear about it. Please visit the MIPC website and email me, or one of the Vice-Chairs, as we would like to highlight your efforts on our Listserv.

---

¹ For more information on how you can support the effort, contact help@lawyerscommittee.org.