



THE OFFICE OF DENVER SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTOR TAY ANDERSON

Family,

I am writing this statement to you all today to inform you on my intentions to remain seated for the pledge of allegiance during the Denver School Board meetings.

As a Black man, I am reminded today and every day of the injustices that still exist in our society. I am remaining seated as a representative for those who were not afforded the right to be here today. Those whose lives and liberties were taken from them, and those still fighting for theirs.

Today, and everyday, I am reminded that **Sandra Bland**, could've been me.

Botham Shem Jean, could've been me. **Trayvon Martin**, **Eric Garner**, **Michael Brown**, **Laquan McDonald**, **Tamir Rice**, **Walter Scott**, **Freddie Gray**, **Jessica Hernandez**, **Marvin Booker**, **Paul Childs**, and **Elijah McClain** all could've been me.

The first time I picked up a megaphone was on July 5th, 2016, the day **Alton Sterling** was killed by two police officers. I picked up that megaphone because I was scared and tired of watching people who look like me continue to be killed. It was my birthday and I realized that I might not live to see my next one and that the only way to stop this was if we all could unite and fight against white supremacy. It was in that moment that I realized that this flag I had always stood for, would not stand for me. It was that moment when I realized that red, white, and blue are supposed to mean freedom until they are flashing behind you.

So today, and for every meeting in the future, I have decided not to stand because we need our leaders to have the courage to fight alongside communities in sending a clear message that we will not stand while white supremacy is thriving. We will not stand while our country separates families and keeps kids in cages. We will not stand while Black and Brown people are being murdered by those who are supposed to "protect and serve" our communities.

I recognize that this decision may be difficult for some to understand. I ask you to reflect on that discomfort and attempt to see this peaceful protest through the lens of the people who are consistently left behind and forgotten when our country celebrates "equity" I end with the somber words of James Baldwin - "It comes as a great shock...to discover that the flag to which you have pledged allegiance...has not pledged allegiance to you."

Thank you,

Tay Anderson - Denver School Board Director