



# The Society for the Study of Social Problems

Publishers of the Journal *Social Problems*

901 McClung Tower University of Tennessee Knoxville, TN 37996-0490  
Phone: 865-689-1531 Fax: 865-689-1534 E-mail: [sssp@utk.edu](mailto:sssp@utk.edu)  
[www.sssp1.org](http://www.sssp1.org)

## OFFICERS (2019-2020)

**Heather M. Dalmage, Ph.D.**  
Roosevelt University  
*President*

**Corey Dolgon, Ph.D.**  
Stonehill College  
*President-Elect*

**Nancy J. Mezey, Ph.D.**  
Monmouth University  
*Past-President*

**Daina Cheyenne Harvey, Ph.D.**  
College of the Holy Cross  
*Vice-President*

**Pamela Anne Quiroz, Ph.D.**  
University of Houston  
*Vice-President-Elect*

**Glenn W. Muschert, Ph.D.**  
Khalifa University of Science & Techno  
*Secretary*

**Susan M. Carlson, Ph.D.**  
Western Michigan University  
*Treasurer*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Maralee Mayberry, Ph.D. (2020)**  
University of South Florida

**Fernando I. Rivera, Ph.D. (2020)**  
University of Central Florida

**Yvonne A. Braun, Ph.D. (2021)**  
University of Oregon

**Matthew W. Hughey, Ph.D. (2021)**  
University of Connecticut

**Debbie A. Potter, Ph.D. (2021)**  
University of Louisville

**Giovanna Follo, Ph.D. (2022)**  
Wright State University

**Bhoomi K. Thakore, Ph.D. (2022)**  
University of Central Florida

**Apoorva Ghosh, Student (2020)**  
University of California, Irvine

**Melissa R. Maxey, Student (2021)**  
University of Oklahoma

**Kristen M. Budd, Ph.D. (2021)**  
Miami University  
*Ex-Officio, Chairperson, Council of the Divisions*

**Annulla Linders, Ph.D. (2021)**  
University of Cincinnati  
*Co-Editor of *Social Problems**

**Earl Wright II, Ph.D. (2021)**  
University of Cincinnati  
*Co-Editor of *Social Problems**

## EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D.**  
University of La Verne (Emeritus)

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

**Michele Smith Koontz**  
University of Tennessee  
*Administrative Officer & Meeting Manager*

**Kelsey Whitaker**  
University of Tennessee  
*Assistant to the Administrative Officer*

**Rachel Cogburn**  
University of Tennessee  
*Information Technology Specialist*

**Zaina Shams**  
University of Tennessee  
*Graduate Research Associate & Webmaster*

July 23, 2020

President Donald Trump  
President of the United States  
White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP), to share with you the attached resolution that the Board adopted in honor of Representative John R. Lewis and as an expression of sadness we feel, collectively, with his death and that of two other giants of the Civil Rights Movement, the Reverend Joseph Lowery and the Reverend C.T. Vivian. Additionally, we are writing to urge you to join us and millions of our fellow citizens in doing what we can to create the kind of society to which these men dedicated their lives to build, i.e., a society free of the racism, misogyny, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination that serve only to divide and weaken us as a nation.

Consistent with the attached resolution, we urge you to do what you can to expand, not contract, voting rights. Toward that end, we urge you to pass and sign into law the Voting Rights Act of 2020, passed by the House of Representatives in December of 2019, and to name the act the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act of 2020. We urge you as well to provide states with sufficient federal funds to ensure fair and safe elections in November.

Since the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis, we have seen a resurgence in protests calling for reforms in the criminal justice system broadly and policing in particular. The United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with nearly 2.3 million people incarcerated. While people of color make up only 37% of the population, they make up 67% of people in prison. Blacks are more likely than whites to be arrested, convicted, and sentenced harshly. Unarmed black men are almost six times more likely to be shot by the police than unarmed white men. Justice demands that these biases in the system be eliminated, and you have the power to eliminate many of these abuses and inequities in the system.

In closing, we wish to express support for the renaming of the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama the John R. Lewis Bridge. Renaming a bridge named after a Grand Dragon of the KKK after a man who devoted his entire life to civil rights will make a strong statement about our country's commitment to correct past wrongs. Even Pettus's great-great granddaughter, Caroline Randall Williams, a writer-in-residence at Vanderbilt University, has spoken out in support of naming the bridge after John Lewis.

While this decision may be strictly a local one, replacing the Alexander Hamilton Stephens statue in the capitol with one of John Lewis is one we hope you can and will support. Stephens, a slaveowner and Vice-President of the Confederacy, stated in 1861, “Many governments have been founded upon the principle of the subordination and serfdom of certain classes of the same race; such were and are in violation of the laws of nature. Our system commits no such violation of nature's laws. With us, all of the white race, however high or low, rich or poor, are equal in the eye of the law. Not so with the negro. Subordination is his place. He, by nature, or by the curse against Canaan, is fitted for that condition which he occupies in our system.” Is this who we want to honor in the Capitol? Meanwhile, there is no doubt that John Lewis is worthy of that honor.

If you wish to discuss any of the content in this letter and resolution with us, please do not hesitate to contact me. We look to you to provide the kind of leadership desperately needed to close the racial divide in our country. We have had it for much too long.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Delgado', written in a cursive style.

Héctor L. Delgado, Ph.D.  
Executive Officer, SSSP  
Professor Emeritus, University of La Verne