

August 10, 2020

Dear Congressional Leader,

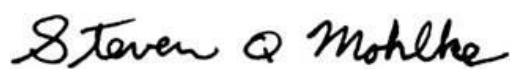
Since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) have advocated for the abolishment of slavery in the United States. The **Thirteenth Amendment** to the Constitution, ratified in 1865, abolished slavery “except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted.” **This clause has allowed slavery to continue in the United States.**

It is important that we complete the work of abolishing slavery now so that the foundational documents of our country no longer continue to allow for the inhumane treatment of imprisoned people. As is apparent in the current cases of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, along with the thousands of other deadly and nondeadly cases across the US, people of color are often treated differently from white people. This leads to disproportionate rates of arrest and incarceration of people of color. According to the July 25, 2020 Federal Bureau of Prisons Inmate Statistics on Race, African-Americans make up 38.2% (60,344 people) of all federally incarcerated people, while, according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons Inmate Statistics on Ethnicity, Hispanics make up 30.8% (49,560 people) of all federally incarcerated people. **These people are considered slaves under the current language of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment.**

We ask you to sponsor a new Amendment to the Constitution that removes the exception clause in section 1 of the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment. **The new Amendment would state the following:**

**Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.**

Sincerely,



Steve Mohlke, General Secretary  
New York Yearly Meeting  
of the Religious Society of Friends



Elaine Learnard, Clerk  
New York Yearly Meeting  
of the Religious Society of Friends