

Andy Dieu - Andrew P. Hill High School

At the earliest age of five, we are taught in school to stand, and to raise our left arm, crossed over our chest over our hearts, to a flag of a country which we do not know much about.

At age five, we are told to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, without much thought, many to all of us did.

For one hundred and eighty days of the school year, we repeat the same procedure over and over, refusing to do so is seen as being rebellious, disrespectful to your own country.

As the years pass, our education grows, we too, grow as a person. One by one, we each start developing our own opinions, whether it be the best sports team, to controversial topics such as politics.

We learn many different things, The Founding Fathers, to Martin Luther King Jr., and many more.

Martin Luther King Jr, a figure taught to us in grade six. One who brought forth changes to our forsakenly guided country, salvation to the opposed from the opposers.

...

Yet we are taught to stand and pledge allegiance to the flag representing a country we have not yet viewed fully with our own two eyes for one hundred and eighty days of the school year.

“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

...

I'm fourteen. I idly sit inside my house, quarantined alone, safe from the widespread disease taking control over our world. The TV flickers.

“I can't breathe.”

“With liberty and justice for all.”

What liberty is there? What justice is there?

In a country where one has to fear the very same system that was supposed to protect its people, solely for the color of their skin and race, there is no liberty and equality between its people.

In a country where the privileged views the minorities with prejudice, there is no liberty and equality between its people.

In a country where the innocent are persecuted solely on their skin color and race, with their own country's justice system going against them, there is no justice.

In a country where immigrants come to seek refuge or in search of the “American Dream” for their families, they are discriminated against.

In a country made where the wealthy become wealthier, and the poor become poorer, where is the fairness and “American Dream” in that?

...

We live in a country where you do not know if fireworks could’ve been gunshots.

...

Now is the time where we see one another as the same
Now is the time to begin trusting once more
Now is the time to change
Take a kneel to the flag
For the next generation’s sake

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.”

Be the change, for the future’s sake.