

“They should all be strung up and hang in the public like the old days.
Lot less of that (expletive) would go on”

–Jeff Snavelly, Darby High School football coach

The purpose of this document is to familiarize you with
1) the aims of the proposed Darby football boycott, 2)
the evidence underlying the justification for the demands
made, and 3) the persons who have taken on the
responsibility of organizing the boycott.

It is sincerely hoped that, regardless of your present
position on the protests across America in response to
racial injustice, you will read carefully these statements.
For in the last analysis, it is the position of persons like
yourself that will determine the extent to which we are
able to avail ourselves of this and other means of non-
violent protest to further push back the barriers of racism
and bigotry that threaten not only the survival of black
people, but also the survival of American society.

1. Goals of the proposed boycott

In a time when violent attacks by police against politically
disenfranchised and marginalized black Americans are
all too commonplace, those of us who have managed to
make some inroads into the conversation by asserting
our first amendment right to peaceably assemble have
the responsibility of searching for new alternatives to
violence for the effective expression of the plight of the
masses of black people.

In the last month alone, thousands of American men,
women, and children were beaten, pepper sprayed,
clubbed, and denied due process for supporting the
Black Lives Matter movement. The behavior of police in
response to these protests has largely resembled the
brutality exhibited in our world history books of the
shameful acts of past and foreign dictatorships and
autocracies. South African apartheid might now be
relegated to our current affairs curriculum, and more
appropriately, may be dubbed “American apartheid”.
When police are engaged in mob vigilantism against the
population they have sworn to protect and serve, they
are no longer enforcing the law, they are violating it.

They are the criminals. And those who condone that
behavior are criminal as well.

Montana has a dark history with vigilante justice, and the
flippant comment made by the Darby football coach on
social media serve only to stoke further fear in an

already anxious and vocal radical minority that craves mob justice and any excuse to turn ownership of a gun into a monopoly on violence. His words are more than just his opinion. Whether or not he wanted to, he injected race into the discussion of high school sports in Montana, and by failing to take the correct action and terminate his employment, Darby High School is insisting that this remain a topic of conversation well into the next school year. They are a dog whistle to racism and brutality against peaceful individuals working to correct the systemic racial discrimination running rampant today. Instead of romanticizing the past, those involved in education in Montana should be dedicated to teaching it. No amount of whitewash can cover the fact that vigilante (mob) justice (violence) left its crimson legacy in the wake of its bloodshed.

The proposed Darby football boycott would accomplish the following:

- a) It would serve as a means of vocalizing the plight of the Black Lives Matter movement and would shed light on the racism run rampant in the criminal justice system. No longer could racists say that protests are the work of rioters and terrorists. The racial issue in this country is an issue that the U.S. is facing before the world, and Montana is a part of it at this crucial and critical time.
- b) It would re-establish the fact that our educational institutions are places where children prepare to enter their adult lives productive and fulfilled, not filled with fear and misinformation about the role of protests to a functioning democracy.
- c) It would afford the proven high school student athletes of Montana an opportunity to share in the preservation of this society and of the first amendment.
- d) It would encourage widespread support for a qualified long-term replacement to fill the position of Darby High School football coach.

2. Evidence and justification

We will not dwell any more on the vile words in the social media post made by the Darby high school football coach. We will focus instead on the vile intent of the author, Jeff Snavelly, in choosing the vile words. The choice of one word speaks more than the rest of the post itself: "ALL".

ALL of them.

They ALL should be hung.

According to Jeff Snavelly, there is no distinction between guilt or innocence. Something we all learned, or taught, in Montana history, is that there is no due process in the court of vigilante justice. Whether or not you believe his denial that the comment was in any way related to race, one cannot deny that the comment is in every way a green light to police brutality. Advocating lawlessness shows wanton disregard for the social

contract he is entrusted to uphold. As a coach to children, he is in a unique position to influence and inspire Darby's student athletes. Instead, he has made it clear, and so has Darby High School, that there is an acceptable level of disdain for justice and fairness in their halls. Evidence of the commonality of the interest between educators and the masses of Americans protesting racial injustice becomes apparent when one sees that even those athletes who have "proven themselves" in competition have been vilified when they have attempted to stand up as men and women of conviction. After the thrill of victory, they may begin to see their "accomplishment" in a brighter light. Colin Kaepernick, a Super Bowl quarterback, has been immorally and unjustly blacklisted from the NFL for no more than exercising his moral prerogative and kneeling during the playing of the national anthem before games.

While the paranoid may perceive the proposed boycott as a demand or directive to individual student athletes, it is not and never will be such. There is nothing for students to boycott. This proposal was adopted for consideration of all principals, teachers, and coaches concerned and to develop the necessary strategy to organize such a program. The overriding goal (that of utilizing one of the few remaining nonviolent ways of effective expression of the plight of black people in America) should be self-evident. In a word, when people are suffering to the extent that they are laying down their lives in the streets during a global pandemic, who is to say that any area is too sacred to be used as an avenue to relieve this suffering.

3. Responsible people

I, Noah Berthelson, am a lifelong Montana resident and the 2020 valedictorian of the Browning High School graduating class. I was inducted in the National Honor Society in 2019 and maintain that status today. I have participated in Speech, Drama, and Debate competitions for all four years of high school, competing at the State tournaments twice and winning multiple awards. I am a Presidential Service Award recipient for my volunteer work with Montana Conservation Corps. I organized and led a student walk-out at my school in coordination with the March for Our Lives movement following the mass shooting at MSDHS in Parkland, Florida, in 2018. That same year, I was awarded the Voice of Change award from Western Native Voice for organizing the student walk-out. I spearheaded a probe into drug testing policies at my school that removed obstacles to education and gave promise for my fellow student athletes' futures. I attended the Kalispell Black Lives Matter protest on June 6 and voiced my support for the goals of the movement. My father and I are currently working to popularize the nonviolent social distance protest method of "webcam photobombing". We were recently featured on NBC Montana for our active targeting of Glacier National Park and its online webcams during the park's opening and over the past

three weeks. I will be attending the University of Montana in Missoula in the 2020 fall semester, where I will be studying Political Science and spearheading more action to correct the racial and social injustices in America.

I, Brandon Berthelson, am a lifelong Montana resident and a 4th grade teacher at Napi Elementary in Browning, Montana. I have taught at Napi Elementary for five years. I graduated from the University of Montana School of Education. I currently live in East Glacier Park on the Blackfeet Reservation with my wife Meghan and our sons, Noah and David.