

Reflective Essay

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly.

For some strange reason, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

These quotes mean very much to me in the context of this class. This is because I have learned what I can truly do to combat the injustices on the personal, community, state, and national level. I can truly grasp the gravity of these quotes because I have learned what is ultimately means to identify, strategize, advocate, and execute fighting for change. On a deeper level, it has taught me to never lose the fire and edge that I have toward injustice and exploitation. Never forgetting that these are human beings that God so graciously placed on this earth to commune and love each other, unconditionally. Who am I to not care about those around me? This is what the quotes above speak so loudly to me. The mere fact that I am here on this earth means I have a responsibility to call injustice what it is, no matter the circumstances I may be in.

I have learned many things about myself as a policy advocate. I think of learning more about my personal biases and confronting this with a newfound courage to advocate for all in its truest sense. Not only advocating for those that I personally want to advocate for/ align with, but for all that are being oppressed and silenced on any level. I also learned that I need to be more conscious that I have two ears and one mouth when it comes to advocacy. When listening to others, I learned that I can often have a response much before I hear them in that moment. This is an area I truly felt challenged on a regular basis; to actively listen with a genuine sincerity and respect for the human being(s) that I am conversing with by letting their full thoughts be expressed before I even think of a response. Another aspect of myself I learned was that when I

advocate I need to ensure that I allow others experience to speak through me as I advocate for them. I may advocate for them and be the mouthpiece but ultimately, it is not about me, it is about those that I am advocating for.

Lastly, I will do policy advocacy as a citizen and social worker heavily on the local and state level. This is because local and state policy advocacy is much more impactful for me. I feel that it is my duty to become involved in local and state policy because that is what the field of social work calls me into. Our voice as citizens and social workers are needed in the rooms where there is change of any kind happening. It is also my duty to stay engaged with current events that are happening at all levels of advocacy.