

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COUNCIL MEMBER GALE A. BREWER
CITY HALL
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: 212-788-6975
FAX: 212-513-7717
www.council.nyc.gov



***** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE *****

***Statement by Council Member Gale A. Brewer on the Death of
Trayvon Martin and the George Zimmerman Trial***

Contact: Will Colegrove
Office: (212) 788-6975
Cell: (347) 461-4329

Trayvon Martin's death was avoidable, that much is certain. The rest of the details of that night were the subject of a lengthy trial, where a jury ruled George Zimmerman not guilty of murder. This verdict brings no justice. It is a tragedy, just as this young man's death was a tragedy. It is the result of what many, myself included, feel is a flawed and dangerous stand-your-ground law.

We should be outraged that the NRA and their ilk have bullied legislatures in several states into stand-your-ground laws and lax concealed-carry regulations that foster vigilantism and preventable deaths.

We should be outraged at a culture that would lead a neighborhood watchman in a gated community to view a young African-American teen with a bag of candy as a threat.

We should be outraged that across our country parents are sitting down with their children to explain to them how the shooting death of a young African-American teen led to an acquittal. They must caution their children that simply by walking down the street, they may be judged as dangerous. They may be stopped by police, or by those who think they are police, and that they may be presumed guilty until proven innocent, simply on the basis of the color of their skin.

The anger sparked by the non-guilty verdict reached by the jury is certainly justifiable. However, we should not be angry at the jury, or even at the prosecution for failing to present sufficient evidence to convict.

The problem is not the specifics of this particular case. The problem is that a young man of color walking down the street in a suburban neighborhood would prompt suspicion. The problem is that a neighborhood watchman had a gun, and that Florida law allowed the watchman to kill the teen based on the perception of imminent danger.

No justice was done in this case. It is now incumbent on all of us who value equality and justice to seek not vengeance, but reasoned introspection about our failings as a nation that allow racial profiling, that allow gun violence, that allow the degradation of an entire class of citizens. The legal system did not fail. We as a country failed, and we will continue to fail until we eliminate the root causes of violence, of racism, and of a shoot-first, ask-questions later mentality.

###