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"Get in good trouble, necessary trouble, and help redeem the soul of America." Former US Representative John Lewis once said this, a man who continuously fought for equality and civil rights throughout his lifetime. Lewis's work as an activist and government official made courageous strides in our society that were of the topmost necessity. In a time of pure hate and discrimination against African American people, Lewis led significant protests, such as the iconic Freedom Fighters protests against *Boynton v. Virginia*. He continued his legacy as a leader in multiple nonviolence activist groups and also when he eventually came to Congress. Today, Representative Lewis's lifetime work of "good trouble" represents the necessity for society to continuously fight for what is right and never be afraid to speak up for the greater good, as it is our job as American individuals to hold the government accountable and remain steadfast in our morals so that we can prevent the tragic prejudices in our history from occurring again.

It is hard to stand up for what is right. To speak up and defy social norms is something that takes courage to do, but it is of utmost importance that we do so; one must use their freedom of speech to get in "good trouble" and stand up for what is right. After years of inhumane police brutality against African Americans and the tragic murder of George Floyd in 2020, the Black Lives Matter movement gained a surge of popularity larger than it had ever seen. Individuals of all colors and backgrounds were using their right to protest to create good trouble and be loud. They made it clear that the violence and mistreatment of Black people in our country have been inhumane for centuries now. It was sickening how certain racial prejudices are still present today and even supported by some law enforcement officials. Some news sources viewed these protests as "violent," but the activists continued using their voices because they knew it was the only way people would listen. As seen in Lewis's civil rights work and the Black Lives Matter movement, protests are important to bring the necessary change to our society that is long overdue, particularly in civil rights issues because the country needs to hear the stories of Black people in order to truly understand the systemic issues with our legal systems. Thus, it is only through the continuous use of speech to create "good trouble" that our country can at least somewhat right the wrongs in our legal system, as the people wronged by the system deserve at least that much.

As students, along with using our voices, it is imperative that we remain unified in our efforts so that we can create greater change. If we all come together to share stories and further learn about other perspectives while living as a minority in America, we can truly create substantial change. John Lewis was known to be both a man of action and a man of words. Our words have so much value and power, and we must use language as a collective body of young activists to learn and come together to share these stories. Indeed using one's voice can also be viewed individualistically, such as through voting. However, the beauty of our democracy is that freedom of speech along with the right to assemble and protest are foundational elements of our country that promote community buy-in. Voting is important, but it is our strength in numbers that can truly move our nation to change, and it is our job as young activists and the next generation to start being more mindful of the stories of those hurt by our nation so that we can come together and push through these issues collectively.

When John Lewis was repeatedly jailed for his protests and civil rights work, he continued to use his voice because he knew our nation still had a long way to go. When Black Lives Matters protesters were criticized for being too loud, the activists continued to lead their efforts because they knew that they could not stop now; evidently, the fight against racial

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prejudice is a life-long battle. While it is not justifiable nor acceptable, we as individuals carry implicit biases and prejudices against other groups of people. However, it is our duty as informed citizens and sympathetic human beings that we continue to educate ourselves and create "good trouble" so that we can continuously learn. It is only through acts of good trouble that we, as a society, can progress to a state of being where individuals do not fear being pulled over by a cop-- one where Black people do not have to worry about being unfairly stereotyped and having to face inhumane treatment because of that. This is the absolute bare minimum, yet this is where our society has fallen behind. Because of individuals like Representative John Lewis, we were able to dismantle a series of racist laws our nation shamelessly agreed upon at one point in time, but it is our duty today to continue that fight and John Lewis's legacy to truly mend the wounds we have created.