

## Unity Rally

I do not feel safe. I do not feel safe at school, at grocery stores, at the mall, or even at home. Why? First, because of the color of my skin. I have to constantly be aware of my surroundings and make sure not to draw too much attention to myself as a black girl. Second, just because I'm a black person, it frightens me that I can be literally anywhere and someone may decide to take my life just because they feel like it. It worries me even more that there are people who have the power to change things in this country, yet, they've done nothing. In fact, many politicians and political leaders seem to be too busy regulating people's bodies that they're forgetting about the people who are already here on earth living and breathing. It really seems like my life doesn't matter to those people, which makes me equally as scared of them.

Right now, I'm in a constant state of anxiety, but I'm dealing with it. I try to gather as much valid information about topics before panicking. I make sure I'm with a trusted adult or friend at all times. I check in on my friends and family periodically to make sure that they are doing well mentally, physically and emotionally. I also take breaks from social media to avoid being overwhelmed by everything that's going on. Despite all my efforts, I'm still extremely worried. I believe that there should be more community resources available for the affected communities, and not just in times of crisis. Making sure that every person feels loved and understood all throughout their lifetime can possibly prevent some people from making these terrible decisions.

I'm sure many people can relate to how I'm feeling; therefore, something must be done. We need to come together as communities and show our local, state, and federal officials that things will not change without new and improved laws. We can also host fundraisers, informational meetings, and provide therapists to aid people who are living through this time. While it would be ideal to have these things available on a national level, we have to make those steps starting right here in Buffalo.

*Statement made at Buffalo Teachers Federation Unity Rally at Martin Luther King, Jr. Park – June 2, 2022 by Brooklyn Bullock – Student at Olmsted School – Grade 11*