



NAACP

Columbus Branch

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PRESS STATEMENT ON JURY VERDICT REACHED IN DEREK CHAUVIN TRIAL

[COLUMBUS, OHIO, April 20, 2021] The following statement can be attributed in full, or in part to the Columbus Branch of the NAACP:

The verdict rendered today finding former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin guilty on all charges for the murder of George Floyd was the right one. Today's outcome sends a clear message to law enforcement that they are not above the law. Their actions have consequences. George Floyd's life mattered and he would be alive today had it not been for Derek Chauvin's callous disregard for human life. Decisive action is needed to prevent the death of civilians.

The current process of holding police officers accountable is apparently not working. Instances of police brutality are steadily increasing and failure to render justice contributes to systemic racism.

As the world watched the trial of Derek Chauvin, Black people in America are still being killed by police. Daunte Wright, a 20 year old Black man, was pulled over in Minneapolis Minnesota for an expired license plate. What should have been a routine traffic stop, resulted in yet another senseless death. This incident occurred within miles from where George Floyd was murdered almost a year ago. Days after Wright's murder, video footage from police body camera was released showing the death of Adam Toledo by law enforcement. Toledo was a 13 year old child killed in Chicago last month, while complying with an officer's commands. He was shot with his hands up.

Here in Columbus, we've witnessed the killings of Black men. The deaths of Casey Goodson Jr. and Andre Hill by the hands of law enforcement, garnering national attention and outrage. Despite video captured by law enforcement, the availability of body camera footage, and the account of bystanders, there does not appear to be any change to policing. Simply put, law enforcement is not held responsible for causing death and harm in particular when Black lives are involved.

The NAACP Columbus Branch remains committed to ensuring greater civilian oversight. These egregious behaviors must stop and sweeping systematic changes are needed. The unjust targeting of Black people is intentional. Racial profiling under the guise of low level offenses is embedded in the culture of police departments. Racism must be rooted out.

We need legislative action to end qualified immunity for police. Police misconduct is an undue burden on the taxpayer. Taxpayers should not shoulder the weight of payouts, which undermines and provides undue protection to those who break the law. Instead, these dollars should be invested into infrastructure, affordable housing, job creation, enrichment programs, mental health services, and equitable education. We demand our elected officials take a stronger stance in addressing systemic racism. We also demand our officials take firm actionable steps toward reimagining policing and pursuing serious discipline for those who break the law and those officers who watch and fail to intervene. We must create a fair, reasonable, and equitable solution where everyone's human rights are protected.

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