



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 29, 2020

**THE GARDEN STATE BAR ASSOCIATION AND  
ASSOCIATION OF BLACK WOMEN LAWYERS OF NEW JERSEY  
STATEMENT REGARDING THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD**

The Garden State Bar Association and the Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey decry the killing of George Floyd and applaud the prompt and swift actions of Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey in firing the officers responsible for Floyd's death and calling for an investigation by the FBI and the United States Department of Justice.

The officers' actions are outrageous and deeply disturbing. The disturbing acts as seen on the video of George Floyd's murder do not reflect the standards espoused by law enforcement to uphold the law, but rather reflect the diminished value those officers placed on the life of a Black man who posed no immediate threat to the officers who took his life. The officers who engaged in such a blatant disregard for human life must be held accountable, just as anyone else who unjustly takes the life of another human being.

The prompt and swift firing of the police officers involved in George Floyd's killing is both morally and legally justified, but it is just a first step toward justice. Police officers should not be exempt from the very criminal justice system that they fuel. We demand that ALL of the officers involved in George Floyd's killing be subject to the criminal justice process as the individuals that they arrest. These officers must be arrested, investigated and prosecuted. The people will not have faith in the system until they see the criminal justice system applied equally to all, including law enforcement officers.

The frequent deaths of unarmed Black people at the hands of some law enforcement officers should be a concern to all Americans. This incident is not an aberration. Indeed, it is a national phenomenon of epidemic proportions. It is apparent that rogue officers view the absence of accountability and consequences for other officers who have killed unarmed black people as a license to kill. We acknowledge that most law enforcement officers do not abandon their duty to protect and serve. Many put their lives on the line daily and honorably for citizens. Nevertheless, the Black community's experience with law enforcement is premised on fear, rather than trust – fear that a simple encounter will turn into a death sentence. This fear has led to an unhealthy relationship with law enforcement that has plagued our community for generations.

The cycle of Black people dying at alarming rates without their killers being held criminally responsible must end here. A Black person's arrest should not present a greater risk of the use of lethal force by the

police than a White person's arrest. Ironically, we address the circumstances of Mr. Floyd's death even as we mourn collectively the deaths of other unarmed Black citizens still in the news from incidents in recent weeks.

Our prayers go out to Mr. Floyd's family. We all mourn his loss. May justice be served for him, our community and all who have lost their lives at the hands of law enforcement officers, who deviate from their training and engage in brutally aggressive tactics, when interacting with Black citizens.

The Garden State Bar Association and the Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey insist that this ongoing crisis be addressed by elected officials followed by legislative and other action. We will be following up in a number of ways to ensure these life and death issues remain at the fore.

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