



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

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Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus Responds to the Killing of George Floyd in Minnesota

MADISON –The Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus released the following statement regarding the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis:

The death of George Floyd earlier this week was preventable. We are certain that kneeling on the neck of a citizen until they lose consciousness is not the proper protocol to execute an arrest in any American city. Mr. Floyd's repeated declaration that he was unable to breathe was met with continued bodily force, which resulted in him losing his life. We send our condolences to the family of Mr. Floyd and it is our hope that justice will be served. The firing and prosecution of one officer and investigations by the FBI and the US Attorney into Mr. Floyd's murder are only the first steps in the journey towards justice.

While Mr. Floyd's death was the catalyst for protests across the country, we must also remain focused on the many instances of police misconduct in the state of Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, African Americans account for only six percent of the population, but are arrested at three times the rate of whites. In most of our state's larger municipalities precarious relationships exist between law enforcement and communities of color. Whether discussing the 1958 death of Daniel Bell at the hands of Milwaukee police; Derek Williams struggle to breathe in a police squad car in 2011, Dontre Hamilton and Sylville Smith's murders in 2014 and 2016; Tony Robinson's 2015 death by Madison police; Ty'rese West's death by a Racine police officer in 2019; or the more recent killings of Ceasar Stinson and Joel Acevedo, law enforcement must reevaluate their interactions with the African American community.

When systemic racism and the transgressions of rogue officers consistently go unchecked; and cases of misconduct are settled out of court at taxpayer expense; the cycle of public outcry and discontent will continue. In times like these, we understand the public's desire for true leadership that instigates radical change in both policy and professional practice. Communities of color can no longer be targeted without impunity.

We encourage our colleagues at all levels of government to aid us in supporting legislation that holds law enforcement, as well as district and city attorneys responsible for their actions and subsequent reactions with regard to police misconduct.

Members of the Wisconsin Legislative Black Caucus are: Senators Lena Taylor (D-Milwaukee) and LaTonya Johnson (D-Milwaukee) and Representatives Jason Fields (D-Milwaukee), David Bowen (D-Milwaukee), Kalan Haywood II (D-Milwaukee), LaKeshia Myers (D-Milwaukee), and Shelia Stubbs (D-Madison).

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