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LANCASTER NAACP RESPONDS TO THE DEATH OF GEORGE FLOYD *WE MUST ADVOCATE FOR JUSTICE AND INCREASE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT*

On Monday, May 25th at 9:25 pm, George Floyd died while in the custody of Officer David Chauvin and three other officers of the Minneapolis Police Department. Video from the scene shows Floyd dying slowly and painfully, while pleading for help. Since then, Officer Chauvin has been arrested and charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter.

Lancaster NAACP echoes and supports the strong statement of Leslie Remond, president, Minneapolis NAACP, who said: “The actions of the officers involved are inexcusable and warrant swift consequences. Their actions represent a dangerous precedent set forth by the racist, xenophobic, and prejudicial sentiment in our society against Black people. We witnessed a violation of our human rights, and we must hold all involved criminally accountable for the death of Mr. Floyd.”¹

The crimes to George Floyd are painful, terrible and very disturbing. It’s an outrageous form of injustice. Watson said . We have seen this with Sandra Bland, Eric Gardner and many others throughout the Civil Rights movement in the past and Present day. Watson said’ Lancaster NAACP urges two responses to George Floyd’s death: legal redress in Minneapolis and civic engagement in all communities.

We must press for justice through the court system echoing our CEO of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). As President and CEO of the NAACP, Derrick Johnson, stated, “The NAACP will not rest until we see these officers charged and convicted for the murder of George Floyd.”² Legal redress is the foundation of the NAACP’s century-long fight for equal rights. Lancaster NAACP provides legal redress process to assist in investigating discrimination complaints in Lancaster city and county. Also if you feel you been racially profiled or discriminated against or have an excessive force issues. You can fill out a complaint of the Discrimination with the NAACP Lancaster Branch. Blanding Watson Said”. We do have a process in place for Legal Redress matters in the Local Branch for Lancaster City and County residents that is separate from the Police and community working Group’ Watson said”.

Civic engagement our powerful solutions Watson said. Vote in the PA primary election on Tuesday, June 2. Vote in the general election in November. Elect local,

¹ This quote from Leslie Remond comes from the NAACP news release: <https://naacp.org/latest/naacp-blasts-minneapolis-police-officers-death-george-floyd/>

² This quote from Derrick Johnson comes from the NAACP news release: <https://naacp.org/latest/naacp-issues-statement-events-surrounding-murder-george-floyd/>

state, and national decision makers who understand the destructive impact of systematic racism on the entire population of the United States. Black families and communities bear this burden daily. All people in minority groups share its impact.

Civic engagement is necessary to improve and support policing that is informed by best practices in racial equity. Lancaster NAACP has supported initiatives to recruit diverse applicants for the city and county police forces, to revise use-of-force policies, to institute use of body cameras, many other police reforms and policies locally. Blanding Watson said “Additionally the NAACP Lancaster will continue to advocate , work with Law Enforcement and other stakeholders throughout the county to work on police reforms and policies in the city and County of Lancaster “Blanding Watson” said. The Lancaster NAACP serves on the Community Police Working Group to strengthen police and community relations for the City of Lancaster. We also are in conversations and meetings with other departments around the County of Lancaster as a part of that process. Watson said.

Members of Lancaster are encouraged to continue to get involved and continue to give input on the ongoing community and police engagement meetings that already exist in terms of police reform for the city Lancaster which started PRE-COVID-19. Watson said”. Meetings are also held with other departments throughout the county Watson said” to improve police policies and reforms is an ongoing initiative.

Civic engagement is necessary to fight high mortality rates in Black communities not only because of inequitable policing, but also from diseases such as cancer and heart disease worsened by poverty and by the lack of clean water, air, and food supplies. A high rate of chronic disease increases susceptibility to illness due to COVID-19. Also to address High unemployment and Economic issues that we are currently experiencing in Lancaster County and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As Lancaster shifts into the “Yellow Phase” of Governor Wolf’s Plan to Reopen, it is essential to follow the guidelines for wearing a mask and for social distancing. Members of Lancaster NAACP urge all to use our collective voice to demand justice for George Floyd in a peaceful and non-violent way.

We echo the words of NAACP President and CEO Derrick Johnson, who said, “We must protest peacefully, demand persistently, and fight politically. But most of all, we must vote in November.”³ The NAACP Lancaster branch along with our State Conference and National NAACP office has been and will be continuing to host Virtual Town Halls on COVID-19 and Communities of Color all around the country and in Pennsylvania and our advocacy will continue advocacy around the 6 game changers of Economics, Criminal Justice, Health, Youth Engagement and Civic Engagement. The Lancaster NAACP will be hosting it’s next Virtual Town-hall on Police and Criminal Justice Engagement next Thursday at 6:00 P.M. People from Lancaster Can Join us on Zoom and on Facebook. Blanding Watson said”. All members from the General Public are invited.

For more information to combat injustice in our communities, please more information or if you have a complaint of discrimination or would like to Join the NAACP please contact the Lancaster Branch of the NAACP at 717.723.8892 .

