



**D.C. CHAPTER OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK LAWYERS
CALLS FOR FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN POLICING**

*Historic freedom organization pledges legal support for defense of protestors arrested
and/or retaliated against by employers or law enforcement for participating in demonstrations,
demands implementation of specific policies and practices*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 12, 2020 — The District of Columbia Chapter of the National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL-DC) condemns the extrajudicial murders of Black people – and, in the most recent instances, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery – by local police and armed vigilante civilians acting in the stead of the police. These murders have spawned demonstrations across the United States and worldwide protesting them as racially motivated and demanding that governments make fundamental changes in policing to address these continuing assaults on the human rights of Black people. Indeed, in a recent press release, the African Union Chairperson stated that the African Union “firmly reaffirms and reiterates” its “rejection of the continuing discriminatory practices against Black citizens of the United States of America.”

People taking to the streets have the support of NCBL-DC, and we pledge to provide assistance to protect their rights to protest and demand fundamental policy changes in policing, including the abolishment of the slavery-based model that policing has followed since its inception. NCBL-DC pledges to be part of the defense of protestors who are arrested for exercising their constitutional rights to petition the government as well as against any retaliatory actions by the police or employers. We will defend and protect those who “take a knee” against police violence and for racial justice, as did Colin Kaepernick four years ago, then an NFL quarterback, whose actions are being vindicated today.

Organized nationally in 1968, the National Conference of Black Lawyers has long spoken out against and battled the racial injustices of the so-called criminal justice system. In 1978 it petitioned the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities highlighting the injustices in the criminal punishment system in the United States and asking for United Nations intervention. NCBL’s second director, Lennox S. Hinds, described this petition and the basis for it in the 1978 volume Illusions of Justice: Human Rights Violations in the United States. A second, augmented edition was published in 2019. NCBL also recently signed on to the June 8, 2020, petition to the United Nations developed by the U.S. Human Rights Network and the American Civil Liberties Union, again asking for UN intervention, this time based on these recent murders of Black people and joined by the families of victims Floyd, Taylor, Michael Brown and Philando Castile with more than 600 groups from more than 60 countries calling for international scrutiny.

NCBL-DC pledges to continue to unmask illusions of justice in its DMV region and nationally on Capitol Hill. We join with others in defending and protecting those on the front line of the movements for justice and in calling for fundamental changes in policing. We support many aspects of legislative police reform bills currently proposed in Congress and before the Council of the District of Columbia. We affirm the call for legislators, local and national, to hold public hearings on the development of policing models that are community-based and invest in community infrastructures that decrease crime and increase community well-being. Specifically:

- NCBL-DC demands that Congress establish policies and procedures on an expedited basis to end the systematic murder of unarmed Black men and women.
- We demand that police departments across the United States require body-worn cameras for all officers.
- We demand the immediate abolishment of the use of chokeholds and neck restraints of any type by police officers, as well as making the same illegal.
- We demand mandatory training and education of all police officers in proper restraint, de-escalation of tensions, racial sensitivity, and racial biases that affect their policing of communities of color.
- We demand police departments more accurately reflect the racial make-ups of the communities they police.
- We demand the immediate suspension without pay of officers across the country involved in the killing of unarmed Black women and men followed by expeditious firings of those officers found to have used prohibited restraint tactics and/or excessive force resulting in such deaths.
- We call on and demand all State's Attorney Offices and District Attorney Offices to fully investigate all claims of police brutality and killings of Black men and women at the hands of law enforcement officers and armed civilians acting in the stead of police.
- We demand that these individuals be expeditiously charged and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for these heinous acts.
- We call on Mayors to fire police chiefs who fail to properly address brutal, negligent and racist actions of their officers that create an atmosphere of racial injustice and suppression and allow it to permeate their departments.

These most recent murders of unarmed Black men and women at the hands of law enforcement have brought significant attention to the discussion about how to redesign policing and sever its connection to the era of enslavement. NCBL-DC supports the need for this discussion and pledges to participate meaningfully in it while aiding activists on the ground legally, as we have done since our inception amid the transformational moment that was 1968.

Contact

Deidra McEachern, Esq., and **Amos Jones**, Esq., Co-Conveners, **NCBL-DC**
Telephone: **(800) 601-9250**, Ext. 4, anytime
E-mail: NCBL_DC@aol.com
World Wide Web: www.ncbl-dc.org