FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Black Democratic Legislative Caucus and Colorado Latino Democratic Caucus
Joint Statement on the Police Killing of George Floyd

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2020
DENVER, CO

For generations, Black Americans are harassed and killed by racist police officers and vigilantes, and every year communities cry out and voice concerns about the unjust treatment of people of color. When it comes to seeking justice, the motives of Black people are questioned, even during simple activities like taking a jog, watching TV in their own homes, or picking up trash around their front yard. Our criminal justice system gives the benefit of the doubt to those who have committed hate crimes, stolen lives and robbed families of their children, spouses, parents, and loved ones.

The lack of accountability for the vast majority of perpetrators is rooted in the racist history of our country, including slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the suppression of voting and other civil rights. This legacy has had lingering and devastating impacts on Black communities and continues to cast Black individuals as not worthy of justice, of full protection by the law, or of basic civil rights.

This has been seen once again in our nation through the brutal killing of George Floyd by an officer of the Minneapolis Police Department that knelt on his neck while Mr. Floyd gasps that he could not breathe. Witnesses called for the Officer to stop, but the officer ignored their pleas. The officer was then able to walk about freely and live his life for four days before he was charged and arrested. This is not what justice looks like.
We the members of the Black Democratic Legislative Caucus of Colorado and the Colorado Democratic Latino Caucus jointly condemn the tragic killing of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement, and the slow response for justice in the arrest of the officer that took his life. This is a continuation of the systematic racism that has plagued our nation since its inception. This must come to an end. We continue to commit ourselves towards working together on solutions that bring equality and stops the fear, hurt, pain, and loss of life that minorities experience everyday because of the color of their skin.

While this took place hundreds of miles away in another state, we recognize that hate takes place here too. In the most recent hate crimes report of statistics released by the FBI, there were “123 reported hate crimes in Colorado [in 2018] compared to 106 in 2017. Of those 123 incidents, 78 were based on race, ethnicity or national origin” (Westword). And with hate crimes on the rise, we also mourn all of the deaths of minority Coloradans who lost their lives from the inexcusable actions of law enforcement like Elijah McClain, Marvin Booker, Michael Marshall, Jessie Hernandez, and De’Von Bailey to name a few. Our respective caucuses are deeply concerned by the increase in bigotry and racism not only across our country, but across Colorado.

Just as Latinos and immigrants ask for support from all Coloradans against an increase in xenophobic and racist hate crimes, as the Colorado Democratic Latino Caucus, we call on Latinos and allies to show collective support and solidarity for the survivors of hate crimes and of police brutality. We mourn the senseless deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and countless other Black individuals who do not feel safe simply being Black in public or at home. We applaud the recent arrests and investigations of alleged perpetrators of these hateful acts, but rue the fact that arrests and investigations only take place after gruesome video footage is released. A person’s murder should not have to be broadcast in order to achieve some semblance of justice.

Furthermore we the members of the Black Democratic Legislative Caucus of Colorado call on the support of African Americans throughout Colorado to stand together for the multitude of families of those that have lost loved ones due to police brutality and hate crimes across this nation. They are our sons and daughters, they are brothers and sisters. Our lives and our liberties must not be stolen from us. We will not accept a double standard. We demand justice and equality. And in our call for justice we remind those that demonstrate their grief to do so in a manner that uplifts our united cause peacefully; our demands for justice must be justifiable in their own right.

Our caucuses together ask that all Coloradans stand up against racism, speak up and report hate crimes in your communities, and support each other as neighbors, as communities, and as Coloradans to build a brighter, less fearful Colorado for our increasingly diverse children and future generations. Join us in putting in the effort to make Colorado more inclusive and welcoming for all people: the effort we put in today will save lives tomorrow.
**Black Democratic Legislative Caucus of Colorado**
State Representative Leslie Herod
State Representative Jovan Melton
State Representative Tony Exum
State Representative Janet Buckner
State Representative Dominique Jackson
State Representative James Coleman
State Senator Rhonda Fields
State Senator Angela Williams

**Colorado Democratic Latino Caucus**
State Representative Serena Gonzales-Gutierrez
State Representative Monica Duran
State Representative Adrienne Benavidez
State Representative Alex Valdez
State Representative Bri Buentello
State Representative Yadira Caraveo
State Representative Sonya Jaquez Lewis
State Representative Donald Valdez
State Representative Kerry Tipper
State Senator Robert Rodriguez
State Senator Julie Gonzales
State Senator Leroy Garcia
State Senator Dominick Moreno

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