

Bergen County Human Relations Commission

Statement Regarding the Murder of George Floyd

June 2020

We are deeply disturbed by the recent murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. While police violence against black citizens is far too common in our country, only occasionally does it come to the attention of the entire nation.

We understand the deep racial history and trauma caused by the culture of social inequality that produced this horrific event. The murder of George Floyd was the tipping point of a much larger and persisting issue. While the police officer murdered George Floyd with nonchalance, arrogance, and cruelty, a black teenage girl had the bravery and presence of mind to film this horrifying event. The disparity of these two images symbolically illustrates the larger racial issues within our society. We seek major change in the wake of this sickening event.

We have a tendency to try to be egalitarian about statements of fairness. While we are dedicated to ensuring the human rights and tolerance of all groups in Bergen County, right now, **Black Lives Matter**. With this tragic murder as a catalyst, our efforts to change policing and society provides an opportunity to secure the rights and improve the experience of Black people in the United States - and as a result - all people in this country.

We happen to live in the exceptional state of New Jersey, and in the exceptional county of Bergen. New Jersey and Bergen County lead the nation, taking progressive actions about policing standards long before the killing of George Floyd. As one of the most diverse counties in the United States, Bergen County - through the NJ Attorney General and the Bergen County Prosecutor and Sheriff - has been working for several years on policies that embrace an appreciation of diversity and human rights.

We, the members of the Bergen County Human Relations Commission, categorically condemn racially based prejudice, oppression, violence, and murder. Unequivocally, we are committed to fair and transparent treatment and equal justice for all residents of our county, state, and country. Protesters across this nation have shown that a vast majority of Americans think that Black Lives Matter. Justice matters. Fairness matters. Equality under the law matters. Transparency matters. Now, more than ever, we must take the opportunity to change the system so that these values become a reality. It is hard and difficult work, but we must stay active in insisting that our government pursue these goals.

We, as the Bergen County Human Relations Commission, stand with all our Residents. We invite you to contact us with your concerns, ideas, and initiatives that we might amplify all our united efforts and influence change across the entire country. We look forward to continued dialogue and an opportunity to share these collective efforts with you not only now but also next year and the year after that. This is hard, slow and steady work. We are here to be your emissaries in ushering in a more just, compassionate, and equitable Bergen County.

May George Floyd's death be the catalyst to bring all people together to eliminate systemic racism.