

YES! Weekly

STATEMENT FROM URBAN LEAGUE LEADERS REGARDING CIVIL UNREST

Jun 1, 2020

National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial, Winston-Salem Urban League President and CEO James Perry, along with Urban League affiliate leaders from around the country, issued the following statement in response to the civil unrest sweeping the nation:

Our communities are overwhelmed with grief. We are heartsick over the inhumanity we have witnessed in the recent deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery. We are appalled by the callous response from the authorities who shrugged in the face of evil.

Cities across the nation have erupted in rage and despair. As civil rights leaders who are committed to racial justice, we share the protesters' anguish, and the heartbreak of the communities where uprisings have turned violent.

There are those who are inciting violence and mayhem. And there are those engaged in peaceful protest. No one should assume they are the same people, and we refute any attempt to discredit or dismiss the just cause for which people are marching based on infiltrators bent on sabotage. We support the right of citizens to engage in peaceful protest. We condemn the use of excessive force to dispel demonstrations.

We are hearing what Martin Luther King, Jr., famously called "the language of the unheard." When George Floyd begged for his life as Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into Floyd's throat, he was unheard. The onlookers pleading with Chauvin to stop were unheard.

The cries for justice have gone unheard long enough.

The long-overdue arrests of Ahmaud Arbery's killers and one of the officers involved in George Floyd's death are merely a first step in a long journey. The other officers involved in Floyd's killing also must be held accountable.

The Urban League Movement has proposed specific recommendations for police reform and accountability. These include the widespread use of body cameras and dashboard cameras, revision of use-of-force policies, officer training and hiring standards, and the immediate appointment of independent prosecutors to investigate police misconduct.

But even more than these measures, we need a revision of our culture. It's a culture that teaches a white woman walking her dog in Central Park that racially-motivated police brutality is a weapon she can use to enforce her own preferred social code.

As we pursue these measures to reform the police in our communities, we call upon all community leaders, elected officials, corporate leaders and social institutions to join us in pursuing policies that promote racial reconciliation.

The Urban League Movement is comprised of the National Urban League and its 90 affiliates, serving 300 communities in 36 states and the District of Columbia.

Marc H. Morial, National Urban League

Gilbert Bland, Urban League of Hampton Roads

N. Charles Anderson, Urban League of Detroit & Southeast Michigan

Phyllis Nichols, Knoxville Area Urban League

Germaine Smith-Baugh, Urban League of Broward County

Esther Bush, Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh

Otha Meadows, Charleston Urban League

Tiffany Majors, Greater Baltimore Urban League

Jennifer Lesko, Broome County Urban League

Eddie L. Koen, Urban League of Greater Southwestern Ohio

Cassandra Jennings, Greater Sacramento Urban League

Warren Logan, Urban League of Greater Chattanooga

Andrea Custis, Urban League of Philadelphia

James T. McLawhorn, Columbia Urban League

Parris Smith, Lorain County Urban League

Ray King, Urban League of San Diego County

George Dean, Greater Phoenix Urban League

Arva Rice, New York Urban League

Thomas Warren, Urban League of Nebraska

Nancy Flake Johnson, Urban League of Greater Atlanta

Michelle Merriweather, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

James Perry, Winston-Salem Urban League

Sorraya Sampson, Urban League of Westchester County

P.G. Peeples, Urban League of Lexington-Fayette County

Patrick Franklin, Urban League of Palm Beach County

Henry Thomas, Urban League of Springfield

Muhammad Umar, Urban League of Hudson County

Brenda McDuffie, Buffalo Urban League

Watson Haynes, Pinellas County Urban League

William Barnes, Birmingham Urban League

George Dean, Greater Phoenix Urban League

Dr. Eve M. Hall, Milwaukee Urban League

Ruben Anthony, Urban league of Greater Madison

Judy Morse, Urban League of Louisiana

Erin Houston, Shenango Valley Urban League

Glenton Gilzean, Central Florida Urban League

Theodia Gillespie, Quad County Urban League

Diane Stevens Robinson, Greater Stark County Urban League

Teddy McDaniel, Urban League of Central Carolinas

Teresa LeGrair, Akron Urban League

Scott Hamilton, Arkansas Urban League

Nina Harris, Springfield Urban League Inc.

Twina Nobles, Tacoma Urban League

Tonja Sesley-Baymon, Memphis Urban League

George H. Lambert Jr., Greater Washington Urban League

Steve Belton, Urban League of the Twin Cities

Sadiqa Reynolds, Louisville Urban League

Valerie Thompson, Urban League of Greater Oklahoma City

Marsha Mockabee, Urban League of Greater Cleveland

Richard Dogan, Urban League of the Upstate

Vanessa Allen McCloud, Urban League of Northwest Indiana

David Hopkins, Urban League of Greater Hartford

Gwendolyn Grant, Urban League of Greater Kansas City

Vivian Fraser, Urban League of Essex County

Karen Freeman-Wilson, Chicago Urban League

Seanelle Hawkins, Urban League of Rochester, Inc.

James Hall, Urban League of Racine and Kenosha

Thomas Conley, Greater-Warren Youngstown Urban League

Stephanie Hightower, Columbus Urban League

Laraine Bryson, Tri-County Urban League

Clifton Harris, Urban League of Middle Tennessee

Quincy Dunlap, Austin Area Urban League

Beneta Burt, Mississippi Urban League

James Hall, Urban League of Racine/Kenosha

Vincent Bell, Urban League of Greater Columbus

Michael Lawson, Los Angeles Urban League

Michael McMillian, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis

Patrick Franklin, Urban League of West Palm Beach County

Tony Mason, Indianapolis Urban League

Richard Danford, Jacksonville Urban League

Judson Robinson Houston Area Urban League

Nina Harris Springfield Urban League