



**For Immediate Release**  
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### **LDF Issues Statement on Fatal Police Shooting of Patrick Lyoya**

In response to the police killing of Patrick Lyoya in Grand Rapids, Michigan, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement:

“We extend our deepest condolences to the family of Patrick Lyoya, and we stand with them as they seek justice and accountability for the outrageous and horrifying killing of their loved one.

“The ruthless shooting of Patrick Lyoya by a Grand Rapids police officer demonstrates yet again that, for Black and Brown people in this country — even for minor offenses such as those relating to vehicle registrations, police encounters remain deadly. Mr. Lyoya’s killing occurred nearly one year to the day after Daunte Wright was killed in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota following a traffic stop for a minor traffic violation, and it is part of the ongoing use of excessive force by law enforcement for minor traffic violations at the expense of Black lives. As the horrifying video recently released by authorities in Grand Rapids shows, Mr. Lyoya was dragged to the ground and struck multiple times before being fatally shot at point-blank range while face-down and kneeling. Make no mistake: the unnamed Grand Rapids Police officer failed to de-escalate this encounter, culminating in his killing of Mr. Lyoya, an immigrant who sought refuge in the United States after fleeing violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

“This violence cannot be divorced from the Grand Rapids Police Department’s long history of racially disparate practices. It also cannot be separated from the profound violence the Department has historically inflicted on Black residents in Michigan. Between 2017 and 2018, Grand Rapids police officers have held unarmed Black children, as young as 11 years old, at gunpoint. A 2017 study also found that Black motorists in Grand Rapids were twice as likely to get pulled over by law enforcement as compared to non-Black drivers.

“We demand full transparency and accountability. A thorough, independent criminal investigation must be conducted into the killing of Mr. Lyoya, and the identity of the officer who killed Mr. Lyoya must be swiftly released. A thorough administrative investigation must also be conducted in parallel into the officer who killed Mr. Lyoya, taking into account any prior history of misconduct. We also call on the Department of Justice to conduct an investigation to examine whether the Grand Rapids Police Department has a pattern-or-practice of unlawful policing.

“The killing of Mr. Lyoya underscores the continuing and urgent need to fundamentally rethink the approach to public safety in our country. The current system is not — and has never been — conducive to the protection and safety of Black and Brown communities.

Some jurisdictions, including Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Brooklyn Center, Minnesota have already passed laws limiting armed law enforcement's involvement for certain non-moving traffic violations. But broader limits are needed across the nation as a critical first step to safeguard Black lives.

“As protestors take to the streets of Grand Rapids, Michigan and elsewhere, demanding accountability and calling out the horrific conduct of law enforcement in connection with this incident, we demand that local officials facilitate these protests, protect the rights of those protesting, and treat those exercising their right to assembly with respect.”

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.*

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