



For Immediate Release
Wednesday, May 25, 2022

LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Issues Statement on Executive Order from Biden Administration on the Two-Year Anniversary of George Floyd's Murder

Today marks the two-year anniversary of George Floyd's murder, during which the Biden Administration released an executive order advancing a number of law enforcement accountability measures, as well as broader actions intended to address deficiencies in our policing system.

In response, Legal Defense Fund (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement:

“Our thoughts go out to George Floyd's family, friends, and loved ones on this difficult day. Mr. Floyd's memory continues to inspire and demand that we confront and dismantle the culture of anti-Black racism and violent policing that led to his murder by Officer Chauvin and bystanding officers, and which continues to cause injury and death to Black and Brown people at disproportionate rates. Today's anniversary commemorates Mr. Floyd's life and recalls the millions of voices that peacefully protested for racial justice and police accountability in streets across this country and across the globe. To honor George Floyd and the many lives lost to police violence that he represents requires that we create a new system of public safety that centers humanity, dignity, and equality; and, more immediately, that we eliminate the elements of our current policing system that allow law enforcement to engage in lawless violence against communities of color with impunity.

“The Executive Order issued by the Biden Administration today is an important step toward addressing police accountability – including the development of a law enforcement accountability database, limits on chokeholds and carotid restraints, restrictions on no-knock entries and limits on the transfers of military equipment to law enforcement agencies. The Order also includes the promotion of several promising initiatives that may encourage significant shifts toward a new vision of public safety, such as a nationwide study by the Department of Health and Human Services on the physical, mental, and public health impacts of law enforcement violence on communities, and identifying resources to address these impacts. Similarly, an interagency endeavor required by the Order which seeks to promote alternatives to arrests and incarceration, restorative justice practices, as well as alternative responders, has the potential to reduce criminalization. The measure is critical in light of the United States' record of mass incarceration that reflects the highest rate of incarceration in the

world and the disproportionate bias that Black people face at every step in the criminal legal system, from policing onward.

“This Executive Order is necessary because of the failure of the United States Senate to advance meaningful legislation to address police accountability and transform public safety. We commend President Biden for helping to fill this void of leadership in the Senate by using his executive powers. We also commend the many advocates, protesters, activists and families of victims of police violence whose unrelenting demand for change compelled this action. Much more can and must be done at the federal, state, and local levels to enact needed measures of accountability and advance equitable systems of safety, particularly in Black and Brown communities that are underserved and over-policed.

“The anniversary of George Floyd’s murder is a sobering reminder of how much work is still needed to end police violence and the structural racism at the foundation of our policing system. LDF will continue working at all levels of government to advance public safety initiatives that are responsive to the communities being served.”

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Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. 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 Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that 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.