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LDF Responds to Video of Allentown Police Officer Kneeling on a Person's Neck

On Saturday, an Allentown Police Department (APD) officer was filmed kneeling on a man's neck after attempting to restrain him. According to law enforcement, the man was physically ill and vomiting outside of a hospital emergency room. The video has been widely circulated and is shockingly similar to the killing of George Floyd, where former Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin was filmed kneeling on Mr. Floyd's neck until he died while other officers watched. In response, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)'s Deputy Director of Policy and Director of State Advocacy Monique Dixon released the following statement:

“Once again, images of a police officer forcibly pinning a man to the ground by driving his knee into a person's neck have been captured on camera. The unidentified male victim survived the neck restraint imposed by the officer. A little more than a month ago, however, George Floyd did not.

“This repeated, potentially deadly use of force, and the obvious frequency at which it is being used, underscores the need for a national ban on neck restraints. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020, a federal bill currently being debated before the U.S. Congress, includes such a ban. But a policy without enforcement is not enough. The APD's use-of-force policy prohibits the use of neck restraints and similar tactics, like chokeholds, except when preventing imminent death. According to the video footage, this exception did not apply and the officer involved seemingly violated this prohibition. There must be consequences for officers who ignore bans on neck restraints, otherwise police department policies designed to keep the public safe are hollow and lack accountability.

“At a time when demonstrations continue to occur nationwide to protest police misconduct, this incident is yet another reason why we need to reimagine public safety and drastically reduce reliance on armed law enforcement in Black and Brown communities that bear the brunt of police violence. As with all incidents of police violence, LDF calls for a thorough, independent investigation into this terrifying and unacceptable incident and the imposition of appropriate charges or disciplinary actions against the officers involved.”

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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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