



**For Immediate Release**  
**Friday, November 8, 2019**

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**LDF Sends Letter to Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
Supporting Complaint Against Judge S. Kastrenakes**

Today the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) sent a letter to the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission in support of a complaint filed by Florida State Senator Bobby Powell, Jr. against Judge John S. Kastrenakes of the 15th Judicial Circuit of Florida for violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct. The letter requests that the Commission specifically look into the judge's use of carceral punishment against Black jurors.

Judge. S. Kastrenakes recently [made national headlines](#) after he sentenced 21-year-old Deandre Somerville to 10 days in jail for missing jury duty. In listing his reasons for such harsh sentencing, the judge pointed out Somerville as being the sole Black juror. It was soon uncovered that he had similarly sentenced another Black prospective juror, Keith Lattimore, to prison for missing jury service in December 2018.

"The historical maltreatment and exclusion of African Americans on juries has seriously undermined the credibility and reliability of the criminal justice system. By imprisoning two Black men for missing jury service, Judge Kastrenakes's orders risks chilling participation in jury service. This threat is particularly burdensome for a protected class that is continuously subjected to the perils of overcriminalization. Judge Kastrenakes's reference to the lack of racial diversity on the jury cannot justify subjecting a Black juror to a harsher sanction for missing jury service and Black Floridians should bear no greater burden of jury service than their peers."

Read the full letter [here](#).

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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 and 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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