

NASW NYC Leadership Statement on the Verdict in the Chauvin Case

This is not a time to celebrate but a time to exhale for just a moment. As we still have work to do. For a few minutes and seconds, we held our breath as we awaited the verdict. Minutes and seconds have a different meaning to all of us now. We have questioned the criminal justice system many times, as it has often let us down. Today, we want to acknowledge the jurors, for the time and dedication to ensuring justice was served.

This verdict was well needed and long overdue. Advocates came together as a community to support the family and hold the system accountable for the many injustices we have seen due to Police brutality.

Hearing guilty on all counts, is a pivotal moment in history, but all we can think about are all our brothers and sisters that have been killed by law enforcement. Daunte Wright, Rayshard Brooks, Daniel Prude, Breonna Taylor, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Stephon Clark, and many more were taken from us because of the landscape of racism in policing in this country.

Their lives need to be acknowledged and their deaths need to be reckoned with. We must honor their humanity by continuing the fight for social justice and reform. This is the time to continue to work towards reforming law enforcement by addressing systemic racism and the unethical policies and procedures that perpetuate the oppression and marginalization of our black and brown communities.

We hope that, as a profession, we can come together to support **H.R.1280 - George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020** introduced by Representative Karen Bass and passed by the House of Representatives. It is awaiting a vote in the US Senate. This legislation aims to hold law enforcement accountable for misconduct in court, improve transparency through data collection, and reform police training and policies.

Now is the time to continue the fight to dismantle unjust oppressive systems, demand real accountability and achieve true justice in this country. Too many black and brown lives have been lost and one guilty verdict does not mean we can rest.

In solidarity,
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