

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (June 9, 2020):

NC Equal Justice Alliance Statement on the Murder of George Floyd and Call to Action for Racial Justice

The North Carolina Equal Justice Alliance joins our community of staff, clients, volunteers, donors, and partners across the state in mourning George Floyd's death, denouncing the police violence that brutally took his life, and reaffirming our commitment to racial justice.

We mourn George Floyd, who was killed, tragically and painfully, at the hands of Minneapolis police. The image of Mr. Floyd's murder is seared into our memories and reinforces the urgency of the fight against systemic racism. Along with so many other senseless deaths, known and unknown -- including David McAtee, Tony McDade, Nina Pop, Dreasjon Reed, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Keith Collins, Sandra Bland, Tamir Rice, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, and Trayvon Martin, Mr. Floyd's murder is an unmistakable cry for justice long denied and has spurred a mass movement. We support this movement and its call for social change. We mourn the many Black Americans whose lives have been unfairly taken, including those whose murders were not captured on video, whose stories have not made the headline news, or whose names are buried deep in our long and shameful history of racist violence.

As we mourn these deaths, we denounce the White supremacy and anti-blackness that has created and perpetuated an unequal justice system. Race-based discrimination and violence must end. We are justice-seeking organizations working for peace, not silence. We seek to amplify the voices of Black, indigenous, and people of color in our communities, who have for years witnessed firsthand the depth of this crisis and fought for justice on behalf of their communities.

Last week, [a group of civil rights leaders called for a National Day of Mourning](#) as the family of George Floyd memorialized his life. Leaders also demanded action to ensure justice through federal, state, and local reform of discriminatory policies and practices within law enforcement and criminal justice systems that oppress and discriminate against Black people in America. We join their call for changes to the systems and structures that give rise to such tragic deaths and rampant inequalities.

The leader of our state's highest court, [Chief Justice Cheri Beasley, called on us all to commit to the practice of justice and work together toward change](#). She wisely stated, in part,

“The work of improving justice is never truly done. Justice is not an achievement. It is a practice. As we change and grow as a society, our understanding of justice changes and grows and expands. And our courts must do the same.

We must come together to firmly and loudly commit to the declaration that all people are created equal, and we must do more than just speak that truth. We must live it every day in our courtrooms. My pledge to you today is that we will.

The recent deaths have once again shed light on the truth that injustice and discrimination still exist. And the protests that have followed have shown us just as brightly that we can come together in expressions of solidarity and grief. My hopeful prayer is that we

continue to learn and grow together and that we have the courage to make change where change is so desperately needed.”

The member organizations of the Equal Justice Alliance fight against the impacts of systemic racism and inequality daily as we seek justice on behalf of our clients, in and outside of the courtroom. We resolve to continue our advocacy which at the core seeks to dismantle systems of inequality and we renew our commitment to fight racism in all its forms wherever it may be found.

Signed,

North Carolina Equal Justice Alliance

The North Carolina Equal Justice Alliance provides central coordination of a sustained, comprehensive, integrated, statewide system to provide the most effective legal services to people in poverty in North Carolina. Members of the Equal Justice Alliance include: Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, Council for Children’s Rights, Disability Rights North Carolina, Financial Protection Law Center, Land Loss Prevention Project, Legal Aid of North Carolina, North Carolina Equal Access to Justice Commission, North Carolina Interest on Lawyers’ Trust Accounts, North Carolina Justice Center, North Carolina Prisoner Legal Services, and Pisgah Legal Services.