

Jewish American Community of Greater Washington

The Jewish American Community of Greater Washington expresses solidarity with the African-American Community by joining all people of good conscience in condemning the brutal killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer. We are outraged that yet another Black life has been lost to systemic American racism.

At a time when our nation has been convulsed by a global health crisis disproportionately impacting communities of color in our region and around the country, we demand justice, not only in the prosecution of arrested former-officer Derek Chauvin, but also in the prosecution of the three former officers who stood by while Floyd was killed. And we demand that the system of ingrained, pernicious racism that enabled this horrific killing be uprooted and replaced by a culture of equitable, just law enforcement that protects Americans of all skin colors.

The Jewish people will not be bystanders—our organizations and our community are called to solidarity with people of color in this moment. We value our long-standing role as mutual friends and allies to the African-American community. We are committed to dismantling institutionalized racism in America. We are in conversation with our African-American partners to listen, learn, and support. And we are committed to making our own institutions more welcoming to Jews of color and bringing justice to all marginalized people. Each of us must dig deeper into our own stereotypes and biases and upend them. Pursuing racial justice is a human and a moral duty, and a reflection of sacred Jewish values.

The work is hard and the obstacles daunting, but we must not resort to exhaustion, cynicism, or complacency. The road to justice begins in our own backyards: we are each responsible for nurturing children, schools and local communities that are free from bias. We are each responsible for creating a society where all young people can flourish and where no child grows up to become the next Derek Chauvin.

There is no room on this journey for violence, destruction, or lawlessness as we have witnessed in our own community in Washington, DC. We were pained to see the burning of St. John's Church, "the Church of the Presidents," and attacks on numerous other landmarks and businesses in our nation's capital. We appreciate those who are responding to this tragedy peacefully and thoughtfully and urge all members of our community to work with one another and with law enforcement to build a better and more inclusive Washington region.

We express our deepest condolences to the family and community of George Floyd and share a traditional Jewish mourning sentiment in asking that his memory be a blessing to those who loved and knew him.
