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STATEMENT FROM THE SEIU ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDERS CAUCUS:

Condemning the Brutal Murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis Police

George Floyd, a Black man was murdered by Minneapolis police on Memorial Day, Monday May 25, 2020 in broad daylight, in front of the community, after a grocery clerk called the police thinking he was writing a bad check. For almost seven minutes, George was pinned to the ground by a white officer named Derek Chauvin who held his knee on his neck, while two other officers held his hands and feet. Tou Thao, an Asian American officer, stood guard fending off community members pleading with the officers to stop. For as long as he was conscious, George can be heard pleading for his life repeatedly saying "Please don't kill me" and "I can't breathe," but the officer refused to remove his knee from George's neck. Four officers in total are responsible for this murder.

The Minneapolis Police claimed George's death was a "medical problem." It wasn't until a video shot by a by-stander was released that clearly showed the officers choking George, yet another blatant and despicable attempt to cover-up and prevent accountability for a brutal act of police violence.

As a community, we are traumatized, outraged, and horrified by yet another unjust killing of a Black man by the police in America. As Asian Pacific Islanders, we refuse to sit silently. It was not too long ago when we heard Eric Garner utter the same last words, "I can't breathe." It was just months ago when officers stormed Breonna Taylor's home and murdered her in a botched investigation. These murders by law enforcement are not new to this decade— what is new is the technology to record and stand testimony to them.

The origin and history of law enforcement are deeply rooted in anti-Black racism.

- The first police departments in the US emerged in the mid-1800s, which were in essence terrorist slave patrols, hunting Black slaves trying to escape¹; the 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was created to ensure that slave patrols remained armed².
- During the civil rights movement, Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner, civil rights leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), were murdered by the KKK deputy sheriff who was initially acquitted before being convicted on federal charges to serve only four years³.
- Two Fruitland Park, Florida police were fired in 2014 when their off duty KKK activities were discovered. They never faced criminal charges despite significant evidence of multiple violent attacks against Black individuals⁴.
- The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) issued a report in 2015 that warned that police departments all over the US are heavily infiltrated by active white supremacists⁵.

- Police violently kill over 1,000 people every year, about half of whom are Black, and the investigation and prosecution of these deaths are tainted by the complicit code of silence prevalent among law enforcement.

All four officers involved in the murder of George Floyd were fired from the Minneapolis Police Department. This is not enough; more action must be taken. The SEIU API Caucus joins with other racial justice organizations to demand further action from the City of Minneapolis, Mayor Jacob Frey, and District Attorney Mike Freeman:

- 1) Charge all these officers with murder.
- 2) Ban these officers from any tax-payer funded positions.
- 3) Protect the right of the community to mourn, heal, and peacefully protest without fear from attack by the police.

We must continue to dismantle structural racism and end anti-Black racism. Racism props up a society in which innocent people like George Floyd are victimized every day, which is why upending such a system is not just a moral imperative, it is also a collective responsibility that falls on all of us. Failing to address structural racism holds all of us back.

We have a vision for a different world, a world where racial and economic equity prevails, where all of us can participate, prosper, and reach our full potential. “Black Lives Matter” is not a slogan; it's a call for justice to end anti-Black racism and to dismantle structural racism. These are the first steps in building a better world for everyone, no matter our skin color or national origin. We believe in making our communities safe in ways that do not involve an institution created and designed to facilitate oppression.

Finally, we call on all Asian Pacific Islanders to stand in solidarity with the Black community. We are all in this together!

¹ Gary Potter, Eastern Kentucky University [The History of Policing in the United States](#)

² Saul Cornell and Eric M. Ruben, The Atlantic [Slavery, the Second Amendment, and the Origins of Public-Carry Jurisprudence](#)

³ The American Experience: Freedom Summer, PBS [Murder in Mississippi | American Experience | Official Site](#)

⁴ Vida B. Johnson, Lewis & Clark Law Review [KKK IN THE PD: WHITE SUPREMACIST POLICE AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT](#)

⁵ Michael Winter, USA Today [KKK membership sinks 2 Florida cops](#)