In unity, for justice

On behalf of the Quad Caucus and as presidents of the four bipartisan national caucuses of state legislators of color, we come together to mourn the loss of George Floyd and to express our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

George Floyd was killed at the hands of several police officers, and under the knee of one. His death is still being investigated, but the eight minutes and forty-six seconds of pieced video present the horrifying fate that often times people of color, especially black men, face in their interaction with law enforcement. The gruesome reality is that, were it not for the mobile phones of bystanders, these police officers would have literally gotten away with murder. That is why the images of his death particularly shake us, his family, his neighborhood, Minnesotans, African Americans, communities of color and decent people across this country, to the core.

We are outraged. We are in pain. Our communities are crying in the streets. To those that say, “as horrible as killing an innocent black man may be, destroying property has to stop,” we say that as horrible as destroying property may be, killing innocent black people has to stop. We must prioritize, unabashedly.

We condemn this heinous killing of a fellow human being and the murder of countless others who have been targeted solely because of the color of their skin.

Racism continues to erode law enforcement and drastic reform is overdue. The more power a government gives an officer, the stricter the standard of conduct they must be held accountable for. We will no longer accept “good faith” assurances of self-reform.

We stand together in solidarity with the Minnesota Legislative People of Color and Indigenous People Caucus (POCI Caucus). We will support their efforts and continue our Quad Caucus work to create state laws that bring accountability, greater humanity, and community-centered public safety towards ending the unacceptable killings of people of color at the hands of our law enforcement entities.

Racism is not unique to law enforcement. It is a social system with multiple dimensions, individual and systemic, that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities while unfairly advantaging other individuals and communities, and causes persistent disparities in health, housing, education, employment, and criminal justice.

We will not rest until we root out every racist policy and practice from our books and in society. We will achieve equity and justice, together.
“The anger and frustration of protesters around the country confirm that the latest killing is just an example of a larger systemic problem. Racism! It has been in our country’s DNA since our founding and inexplicably interwoven in our institutions like law enforcement,” said the National Black Caucus of State Legislators President, Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter, of South Carolina.

“As we rise together against hate crimes toward Asian Americans, we also stand in strong solidarity with the African American community and fight against injustice,” said National Asian Pacific American Caucus of State Legislators Chair Kyle Yamashita, State Representative of Hawaii.

“Law and order is only legitimate if it operates in furtherance of justice. We demand justice be done for our African American brethren and for all people in this country,” said National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators President and New Mexico State Senator, Daniel A. Ivey-Soto.

“We stand in solidarity with all of our African American brothers and sisters, knowing firsthand, the harmful effects of racist policies and police brutality all too well. It is our obligation as legislators of color to unite in these tragic and trying times and be the voice we were elected to be for all of our people and change these systems,” said National Caucus of Native American State Legislators Chair New Mexico State Senator Benny Shendo.