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The National Black Caucus of State Legislators Issues Statement on the Sentencing of Derek Chauvin

Washington, D.C. – June 25, 2021 – The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL)

At the end of the day, this sentencing decision is about the respect and dignity every human being deserves. In reaching his decision today, Minnesota Judge Peter A. Cahill began a historically significant, but long overdue nudge toward the equal valuation of black life in America. We are not under any illusion that Judge Cayhill's decision is a social or legal panacea, but in terms of accountability, the Court's decision is meaningful and precedent setting. Americans of all colors, particularly those who protested, those who were jailed; and even those survivors who lost loved ones in our country's most recent civil rights movement, now can breathe a little better knowing what accountability looks like in this case.

"Folks will certainly debate the impact of today's sentencing decision, but at a minimum, and in my view, it validates the courage of the George Floyd Family and witnesses who testified during Mr. Floyd's murder trial. It's worth noting, this decision would not have occurred without the diligence and skill of Attorney General Keith Ellison and his team," said NBCSL President Billy Mitchell.

How much progress will America make in terms of racial reconciliation and social justice over the next twenty years? Will we look back on this day as an aberration, or will we as a genuinely united people say that today, perhaps with this decision, we began to make good on our founding fathers aspirational rhetoric of a more perfect Union where all citizens enjoy certain unalienable rights? Only time will provide answers to these questions. As we have done for over four decades, NBCSL will continue to fight for equal justice under the law for all Americans, but especially for those in communities of color. Today this fight includes substantive law enforcement reform. We encourage you to join us in this fight.

For more information on NBCSL's law enforcement reform efforts [click here:](https://nbcsl.org/public-policy/docs/file/271-resolution-lje-21-08.html)
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