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The National Black Caucus of State Legislators Statement on Black History Month

Washington, D.C. – February 3, 2021 – The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL)

In 2020, we began a decade in American History that has so far proven to be unprecedented. A year ago, we were learning just how vulnerable and ill-prepared America was to protect its people from a SARS CO-2 virus, now commonly referred to as COVID-19. As this pandemic swept through our nation, it confirmed for us again the harsh reality and disparities that our forefathers faced living as black people in America. Those disparities coupled with a resurgence of indiscriminate violence against, and killing of black people by police officers proved to be the spark that ignited America's latest civil rights and social justice era. This decade has proven to be anything but "business as usual," and perhaps that's a good thing.

As we recognize Black History Month we honor those Americans who marched in the streets of Seattle and Portland to protest police brutality and reaffirm their person-hood. We honor those Americans in Louisville who demanded accountability and transparency in the criminal justice system. We honor those Americans in Columbus who marched to demand that state sponsored police terrorism must end. We honor those Americans in Charlottesville who peacefully assembled to protest against racism and white supremacy. We honor those Americans in Georgia and in other states who turned out to vote in record numbers. And for every American who stood up for the rights of people of color we say, "*Thank you!*"

Since 1977, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators has served its members by developing, conducting and promoting educational, research and training programs designed to enhance the effectiveness of black state legislators, and our investment has paid dividends. "Our members have been the glue holding the fabric of this democracy together and today, their grit and determination serves as the fuel to propel us through these challenging and doubt-filled times", said, Georgia State Representative Billy Mitchell, NBCSL President.

Our Members deserve and demand their seat at the table where policy decisions are made for the future of the nation we have defended, and in some cases died to protect. We celebrate Black History by working to ensure the evil days of America's past are not repeated, and that her best days, her most equitable and inclusive days lie ahead.

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