For Immediate Release
June 2, 2020

Oregon Minority Lawyers Association Statement on the Death of George Floyd and the Surrounding Events of Protest in Minneapolis, Portland, and Around the United States

The killing of George Floyd—and countless others—by those whose mission is to protect with courage and serve with compassion is an unspeakable tragedy. By now, thousands across our state and millions across the country have watched in horror the graphic footage of Mr. Floyd being pinned down by a (former) Minneapolis police officer—all while Mr. Floyd repeatedly states, "I can't breathe." Unfortunately, police brutality and racial injustice is not a new development. For some of us, including judges, lawyers, legal professionals, and law students, racism and the fear of discrimination are ever-present in our lives.

It is telling that despite the danger of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the devastating impact it has had on our communities and economies, families and communities across the country are coming together to protest against systemic racial issues. Over the last few days, we have seen these issues manifest into sadness, fear, confusion, and, yes, even anger. For some of us, the death of Mr. Floyd was when we finally said no más; enough is enough.

As fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters, we know what it is like when our loved ones leave the safety of our homes and we worry whether they will return. We worry about whether they are wearing appropriate clothing so that they are not "suspects" or "targets." We worry about whether we taught them enough about not "escalating" a situation out of fear that we may see them in the evening news. We also worry about whether we are teaching one another how to be active participants in our democracy and community builders, so that we can join hands and knock down the walls of injustice that will grant future generations greater access to economic, social, and political power.

The Oregon Minority Lawyers Association (OMLA) stands in solidarity with all communities—especially the Black community—that stand against police brutality, racial injustice, racism, and the deterioration of the Rule of Law. We have faith that peaceful protests will allow this great nation to realize a truth that is evident to many of us, that the justice and law enforcement system is failing communities of color—and all Americans. The federal government and state and local governments must examine laws and policies that despite
reassurances repeatedly result in the taking of innocent lives during encounters with law enforcement. Until these policies, which are rooted in historical institutional racism and biases against communities of color, these tragedies and flagrant violations of civil rights will continue to hurt our communities.

To be clear, OMLA does not condone violence or looting and condemns the exploitation of peaceful protests by agitators—whether right wing or left wing—attempting to destabilize civil society and the Rule of Law.

We do, however, support Black and Brown lives. We fervently support peaceful protests and demands for justice for our communities. OMLA denounces governmental suppression of nonviolent protests as blatant violations of our First Amendment rights. We support listening and taking care of one another as we reach for the American dream. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said:

> When our days become dreary with low-hovering clouds of despair, and when our nights become darker than a thousand midnights, let us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountains of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize that the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Finally, OMLA calls on our leaders and elected officials at the local, state, and national levels to rise up, take a stand, and enact legislation that will address abuses of power and racial injustice and to take immediate, affirmative steps to protect freedom of expression and the press.

To demonstrate our commitment to the Floyd family and the fight against racial injustice and for criminal justice reform, OMLA will be donating to the following organizations:

- **The Bail Project**: A nonprofit that aims to mitigate incarceration rates through bail reform - [https://bailproject.org/](https://bailproject.org/)

- **Campaign Zero**: An organization that utilizes research-based policy solutions to end police brutality in the U.S.- [https://www.joincampaignzero.org/](https://www.joincampaignzero.org/)

- **The Know Your Rights Camp**: An organization founded by Colin Kaepernick that provides education and training in black and brown communities, set up a legal fund for Minneapolis protestors - [https://www.knowyourrightscamp.com/](https://www.knowyourrightscamp.com/) and [https://www.knowyourrightscamp.com/legal](https://www.knowyourrightscamp.com/legal)

- **The NAACP Legal Defense Fund**: An organization that supports racial justice through advocacy, litigation, and education - [https://www.naacpldf.org/about-us/](https://www.naacpldf.org/about-us/)

We call on our members, our sponsors, our allies, Oregon law firms, Oregon State Bar members, Oregon businesses, Oregon public officials, and Oregon Governor Kate Brown to join us in supporting the Floyd family, communities impacted by police violence, and peaceful protesters by donating to these organizations.
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* This statement reflects the position of the Oregon Minority Lawyers Association. It does not reflect the position of the Oregon State Bar or any other bar association. Board Members and Advisory Board Members affiliated with the judicial and executive branches of the federal, state, and local governments did not participate in the issuance of this statement.

About the Oregon Minority Lawyers Association

*Founded in 1991, the Oregon Minority Lawyers Association (OMLA) is committed to making the Oregon legal community a welcoming environment where people of all colors, races, and ethnic backgrounds can excel academically, professionally, and personally. To learn more about OMLA, visit https://www.omlalawyers.com/, like on us Facebook, and follow us on Twitter (@ORminoritylaw).*