



Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Urges Police Reform based on 2018 Report on Police Practices.

June 8, 2020

The Minnesota Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights offers this statement¹ as Minnesotans mourn the death of George Floyd who died while in the custody of Minneapolis police officers. As Minnesotans mourn, here in our state, and in cities around the country, millions of people are demanding justice for the killing of George Floyd, as well as justice for the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and countless other Black, Indigenous and people-of-color at the hands of law enforcement personnel.

Since 2000, one hundred and ninety-three people have been the victims of homicide by Minnesota law enforcement.² Eighty-six people or forty-five (45%) of these victims are Black, Indigenous or Persons of Color (BIPOC) despite being represented as approximately 15 percent (15%) of the state's population.³ Many will argue that the majority of these killings were 'justified' according to the standards that exists for police-involved homicides. In the killings that involved unarmed victims, the MNSAC believes that these killings could have been avoided with better police training in, and use of, de-escalation techniques, less dependency on use-of-force and more orienting to community policing.

In 2018, the Minnesota Advisory Committee published a report titled *[Civil Rights and Policing Practices in Minnesota](#)*. That report, based on research and testimony from stakeholders, included a recommendation that all police officers in Minnesota receive comprehensive training in use-of-force and in de-escalation techniques. Clearly, **training is not enough** – especially if the techniques are not put into practice in the field. In addition to working more diligently to diffuse and de-escalate critical incidences, police departments must also reevaluate use-of-force policies and make changes that focus more heavily on preserving the sanctity of life of civilians, including policies that focus on how to engage with persons in a mental health crisis.

With this statement the Minnesota Advisory Committee makes an appeal to all police

¹ On June 5, 2020, the Minnesota Advisory Committee approved this statement in a 6-1 vote.

² Jeff Hargarten et al., *Every Police-Involved Death in Minnesota since 2000*, Min. Star Trib. (updated May 31, 2020), <https://www.startribune.com/fatal-police-encounters-since-2000/50208871/>.

³ Ibid.

departments in the State of Minnesota: rid your departments of bad cops. Create a culture within your department that makes it clear, without equivocation, that to stand by and witness a fellow-officer harm or kill a person is not merely unacceptable – it is criminal.

To our fellow Minnesotans: we mourn with you. We demand justice alongside you.

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of George Floyd. May he rest in power.

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The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, established by the Civil Rights Act of 1957, is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement.

Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. The Commission: in our 7th decade, a continuing legacy of influence in civil rights. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).