



THE PENNSYLVANIA INTERBRANCH COMMISSION FOR GENDER, RACIAL, AND ETHNIC FAIRNESS

200 First Avenue, Fourth Floor
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222
412-697-1311
pa-interbranchcommission.com

Statement by the Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness regarding the Derek Chauvin Conviction

The Pennsylvania Interbranch Commission for Gender, Racial and Ethnic Fairness wishes to extend its appreciation to the prosecutors, brave witnesses and jurors who had the courage to stand up to the racism and brutality that has permeated the law enforcement and criminal justice system in this country for too long. Holding a law enforcement official accountable for the murder of a fellow citizen is indeed a victory to be acknowledged in this system.

Yet, as news of the verdict in the George Floyd murder case reverberates throughout the country, many of our citizens have expressed mixed feelings about it. On the one hand, there is a sense of relief, especially within our diverse communities, that our criminal justice system has finally tried and convicted a police officer of murder for his use of lethal force against an unarmed person of color. Among many others, however, there is anger and frustration with our system's repeated failure to do justice in such cases. Too frequently, officers are never charged following their deadly use of force against people of color. And in the numerous tragedies that have followed George Floyd's death, accountability remains an open question.

We share these feelings of anger and frustration, and also recognize that a deserved moment of respite will only retain its significance if accompanied by a renewed commitment to root out systemic racism and combat discrimination in all forms. Accordingly, while the conviction of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd is an important step forward in meaningfully reforming our nation's policing system, we must redouble our efforts to carry on this progress in a concrete way. Among other efforts, we must enact laws that comprehensively, without exceptions, ban the use of officer-induced chokeholds, require special training for police on de-escalating encounters with mentally ill individuals, impose regulations that require police departments to identify and remove officers who have histories of misconduct, and otherwise reexamine the notion of what it means to uphold our laws and protect the public.

In reasserting its mission "to promote the equal application of the law for all citizens," the Commission stands firm in its efforts to ensure that the rare rebuke of police misconduct becomes the common display of accountability. While meaningful change is neither easy nor instantaneous, its foundations are best laid by turning the momentum of solemn victories into the reality of lasting reform.