



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Brostoff Statement on George Floyd and Justice

MILWAUKEE – Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-Milwaukee) released the following statement in response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25 and the nationwide uprisings for justice that have sprung up in the days since:

“George Floyd should be alive today. Full stop. His unwarranted and inhumane killing at the hands of a Minneapolis Police officer, while three other officers stood by and did nothing, continues a horrifying and unjust pattern of police violence against Black people in the United States. But his death lit a spark that has inspired millions to rise up, and *demand* an end to systemic racism and structural violence in our country.

Some in our communities decry the disruptions that these uprisings have brought, and long for the so-called ‘peace’ that preceded the protests. But what value is there in an illusory ‘peace’ for some of our neighborhoods, while horrific, structural violence plagues others? There is no peace without justice! In the absence of true justice in our society - racial, economic, and structural - ‘peace’ is nothing more than a buzzword bandied about by those who live comfortably, untouched by the systemic violence that lurks below the surface every single day.

In recent days, we have seen that systemic violence reveal itself plainly. As we’ve watched truly peaceful protestors self-police destructive bad actors in their midst and direct their grief and rage into organization, they have been met not with understanding or gratitude, but instead with repression and the full force of militarized police. What ‘peace’ do you bring when you institute and enforce curfews that criminalize your people? What laws are you enforcing when you forcibly arrest legal observers and citizens who have chosen to exercise their First Amendment rights? Who do you ‘serve and protect’ when you fire tear gas and rubber bullets into peaceful crowds in our streets, while positioned behind shields or on top of armored vehicles? Our streets are not a warzone! Our neighbors are not ‘enemy combatants’!

And so again, I want to return to the idea of ‘peace.’ We will have peace not when riot police, the national guard, or the military patrol our streets and repress protests, but only when we see justice served, from top to bottom. We need to center justice, not punishment, in our criminal justice and law enforcement systems. We need an end to the militarization and proliferation of police in our communities of color. And we need to tackle the legacy of systemic racism in this country.

Milwaukee - Chief Morales is up for review on July 16, and the Fire and Police Commission is looking for community input. Now is the time to make our voices heard, and let them know loudly and clearly that in order to create peace in Milwaukee, we must center justice.”

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