

June 3, 2020

## **Response to Boston Police Patrolmen's Association's Letter to Suffolk District Attorney Rachael Rollins**

We, the undersigned, condemn in the strongest possible terms the letter sent by the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association (BPPA) to Suffolk District Attorney Rachael Rollins on June 2, 2020. For the BPPA to attack the powerful statements of D.A. Rollins without *any* mention of the context of her remarks—a national racial justice reckoning with yet another brutal killing of a Black man by law enforcement officers—is wrong. We call upon the BPPA to immediately retract their letter, to issue a public apology to D.A. Rollins and Boston's communities of color, and to offer to meet with community leaders to understand their role in this struggle.

George Floyd was murdered by a police officer. That is a simple and incontrovertible fact, supported not only by graphic video evidence but by a medical autopsy. Across the country, hundreds of law enforcement officials have expressed outrage at his death. But the BPPA, the largest police union in a majority-minority city, has been silent. That silence is telling. It does not reflect unity, or empathy. It is a profound step backwards, retreating from decades of progress on diversity and community policy. That silence is, to use the BPPA's own words, dangerous, divisive, and wholly unwarranted.

In her public statements, D.A. Rollins—the first woman of color in the Commonwealth to serve as district attorney and first ever woman to serve in Suffolk County—acknowledged that fact and spoke to the pain of the Black community, who have watched countless men and women die in police custody because of the color of their skin. Although there are undoubtedly law enforcement officers who eschew excessive force and serve their communities with respect, it is right and necessary to speak up when officers fail the very people they are meant to serve and protect.

The Boston Police Department is not immune from these failures. The Department can and must do better.

D.A. Rollins called upon law enforcement unions like the BPPA to be a part of the solution. She also called on all members of the judicial system, including district attorneys across the Commonwealth, and the courts. She reminded us that we all have a role to play in ending systemic racism. We need those of all races and all walks of life to join in that fight without equivocation and with humility.

We commend D.A. Rollins for her remarks and stand with her and with our communities of color in solidarity and strength.

### **Signatories:**

Lawyers for Civil Rights

NAACP Boston Branch

Massachusetts Black Lawyers Association

Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys

ACLU of Massachusetts

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, MA-7

Sonia Chang-Diaz, State Senator

Becca Rausch, State Senator

Russell Holmes, State Representative, 6th Suffolk

Chynah Tyler, State Representative, 7th Suffolk

Nika Elugardo, State Representative, 15th Suffolk

Liz Miranda, State Representative, 5th Suffolk

Jon Santiago, State Representative, 9th Suffolk

Tram Nguyen, Esq., State Representative, 18th Essex

Maria Robinson, State Representative, 6th Middlesex

Mike Connolly, State Representative, 26th Middlesex

Denise Provost, State Representative, 27th Middlesex

Jack Lewis, State Representative, 7th Middlesex

Lindsay Sabadosa, State Representative, 1st Hampshire

Boston City Council President Kim Janey

Boston City Councilor Michelle Wu, At-Large

Boston City Councilor Julia Mejia, At-Large

Boston City Councilor Lydia Edwards, District 1

Boston City Councilor Andrea Campbell, District 4

Boston City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo, District 5

Reverend Gloria White-Hammond, Co-Pastor of Bethel AME Church

Reverend Ray A. Hammond, Co-Pastor of Bethel AME Church

Reverend Willie Bodrick, II, J.D., Associate Pastor of the Historic Twelfth Baptist Church

Reverend Jeffrey Brown, Associate Pastor of the Historic Twelfth Baptist Church

Reverend Art Gordon, M.Div., Senior Pastor of St. John Missionary Baptist Church

Pastor Bruce Wall, Global Ministries Christian Church