Statement in Support of the Black Community and Condemnation of Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice and Policing Systems

Endorsed March 29, 2021

WHEREAS, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association ("NAPABA") is the preeminent professional development organization and voice for 50,000 Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students. NAPABA represents the interests of nearly 90 national, state, and local Asian Pacific American bar associations;

WHEREAS, NAPABA as the national voice for the Asian Pacific American legal profession, promotes justice, equity, and opportunity for Asian Pacific Americans. It fosters professional development, legal scholarship, advocacy, and community involvement;

WHEREAS, NAPABA - since its inception - has acted to advance civil rights in the United States, including combating bias, hate, and violence against the immigrant community and communities of color;

WHEREAS, in 2020, in the midst of a global pandemic that shed light on the social, health, and economic inequities present within communities of color relative to this country’s society at large, the United States faced a critical inflection point with the Black community brought on by the killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor - along with many others before them - as a result of systemic bigotry and bias, and the institutions that uphold these tenets;

WHEREAS, in the wake of these deaths, NAPABA demanded change;

WHEREAS, NAPABA called for a reckoning with “the deeply rooted racism that exists in the United States,”

1 https://www.napaba.org/page/20_06_Solidarity
WHEREAS, NAPABA insists that we work to create trust and fairness in our legal system by addressing systemic bias in the law to safeguard civil rights, civil liberties, and justice for all;

WHEREAS, NAPABA recognizes the history of the unequal use of force against the Black community;


WHEREAS, all of the bar associations above recognized the need for cross-racial solidarity to dismantle systemic injustice, bias, and racism in policing;

WHEREAS, a call for change must be followed by action;

WHEREAS, NAPABA recognized the critical role of building trust between law enforcement and communities of color and favoring policies that seek to build relationships with the immigrant community that promote public safety over those that engender mistrust;³

WHEREAS, the moment calls for a fundamental rethinking of how policing occurs in communities all across the United States;

² The statements are available at https://www.napaba.org/page/20_06_Solidarity
WHEREAS, leaders across government - federal, state, local - must commit to a culture
of change within law enforcement, promoting community policing which starts from the
moment of initial training and reinforced consistently and repeatedly thereafter over the
course of an officer’s career;

WHEREAS, diversity, inclusion, implicit bias, and de-escalation training for all law
enforcement officers is a critical element of this culture change;

WHEREAS, to ensure broad accountability and establish uniform best practices and
standards of conduct and professionalism, there needs to be high levels of
communication, collaboration, coordination, and cooperation among local, state and
federal governments, and their agencies, with meaningful involvement by the public,
including communities of color;

WHEREAS, use of force investigations, especially when the use of force leads to death
must be conducted fully, fairly, independently, with the utmost integrity, and with
transparency;

WHEREAS, leaders must explore innovative ways to bridge the gap in trust between
the community and their law enforcement organizations, including the recommendations
set out in the Final Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing,4
chaired by former Philadelphia Police Department Commissioner Charles Ramsey and
Professor Laurie Robinson of George Mason University; and

WHEREAS, other proposals to reform the criminal justice system have been offered by
elected officials, scholars, advocates, and activists, including the George Floyd Justice
in Policing Act (H.R. 1280, 117th Congress);5

WHEREAS, among the proposed reforms being debated, are the introduction of body
worn cameras, the creation of citizen review boards, the lowering of the criminal intent
needed to prosecute police officers engaged in misconduct, the reform of the qualified
immunity doctrine in civil actions, the creation of a national registry to track complaints
and police misconduct, the reporting of use-of-force incidents, and the incorporation of
community based policing strategies;

WHEREAS, justice demands that we collectively rise to the moment;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that NAPABA:

1. Stands in solidarity with the Black community, recognizing the historic impacts of systemic bias in policing, and to resolve the systemic problems in the criminal justice and policing system.

2. Condemns systemic bias within our criminal justice and policing system.

3. Supports measures to promote a culture of community policing, meaningful accountability, training, and integrity, transparency, and data collection in use of force investigations as outlined above.

4. Encourages its members to be part of efforts to identify and address systemic bias in the criminal justice system.

5. Supports the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 1280, 117th) and endorses the recommendations of the Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

6. Authorizes its president, board, and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to its members, affiliates, other bar associations, members of Congress, the Administration, the press, and others to take steps to implement this resolution, as they deem necessary.

7. Supports this resolution as a policy priority until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.