



NASW Ohio Solidarity Statement with Movement for Black Lives

The staff and leadership of the National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter wish to extend support and solidarity with all those protesting police violence and systemic racism in response to the unjust and extrajudicial murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless others, named and unnamed since the first enslaved African people were brought to what is now known as the United States of America.

NASW Ohio recognizes that systemic racism is not a problem isolated within police departments and that social workers also have a responsibility to address such oppression as it manifests in the behavioral health, broader social service sector and in ourselves. We call all social workers, particularly white social workers, to be in continual assessment of our own racial bias and the manifestations of systemic racism within our agencies and the systems we work throughout. We also acknowledge that many social workers regularly work with the police for example during a client's mental health crisis. It is critical that social workers evaluate the impact that our own relationship and reliance on police has on the well-being of our clients, particularly Black clients, and other clients of color.

Across Ohio and the world, thousands of people, including many social workers are raising their voices and demanding an end to anti-Black police violence and the many other manifestations of white supremacy that have gone unaddressed for too long. We stand with these protestors in justified anger and dismay. We believe in the power of civil disobedience resistance and recognize that without mass protest we would not have many of the rights we take for granted today. We unequivocally condemn the militarized response to the peaceful assembly and protest as unnecessary, disproportionate, and contradictory to the expressed freedoms of speech and assembly granted by the United States Constitution.

As the primary source of expertise on social work values and ethics in Ohio, NASW Ohio wishes to uplift and support the systemic solutions proposed by the broad-based Movement for Black Lives. These demands include transformative shifts toward community oversight, accountability of law enforcement, and divestment from militarized and "broken windows" policing tactics that fail to meet basic human needs paired with dramatic investment in health, housing, safety, and education. It is clear that the existing methods of policing have not reflected the dignity and worth of every individual equally, as they protect the safety and privileges of predominantly white, wealthy communities at the expense of communities of poor, Black, indigenous and people of color.

In summary, NASW Ohio stands in ongoing solidarity with the families and communities of the many victims of police violence and the broader Movement for Black Lives as it is expressed locally in Ohio.