



Statement in Response to the Shooting of Jacob Blake
August 26, 2020

The National Association for Public Defense (NAPD) is outraged by the police shooting of Jacob Blake, and reiterates its support for both the Black Lives Matter movement and comprehensive police and criminal justice reform. It is appalling to again be grieving the shooting - in the back - of a Black man by police. For the past 3 months since the killings of George Floyd, Rayshard Brooks, and Breonna Taylor, in communities across the nation, rural and urban, hundreds of thousands of people have participated in publicly demanding a commitment to policy, training and resource decisions that acknowledge the experience of Black people and affirms that their lives matter. We have joined you; we stand with you now.

Public defenders daily bear witness to the devastating effects of racism - both direct and manifest as racist policy - on communities of color. Despite widespread documentation through cellphones and body worn cameras, police continue to explicitly target Black people with violence. No one can dispute that the culture of policing reflects a deaf ear to the communities that they serve and a reliance on systemic protection from accountability. This must end.

We ardently hope for the best medical outcome for Jacob Blake and hope that this newest example of police violence will help fuel the movement for police and for criminal system reform that examines and addresses all the ways that Black people are harmed by a system that is built on a foundation of pervasive racial injustice resulting in the United States leading the world in mass incarceration.

It is past time for a racial reckoning in this country. We applaud all the criminal system agency partners who have started this critical work. For our clients in oppressed communities, we recognize our duty to fight not only for your individual cases but for the improvement of a system that is so broken it cannot credibly purport to deliver justice.

Jacob Blake's life matters, and NAPD sends the support of our 22,000 members for his recovery and for a continuation of our racial reckoning and healing that this nation is longing for.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director, NAPD

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