

Essex Police Chief's Statement on the Death of George Floyd

ESSEX -- Chief Paul Francis wishes to provide the following statement regarding the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis Police:

"I am heartbroken over the needless death of George Floyd at the hands of people who are sworn to protect and serve. I have spoken with the members of the Essex Police Department and they share in my sadness and frustration.

"This murder, which was perpetrated through the direct action -- as well as the inaction -- of members of the Minneapolis Police Department is sickening for all good police officers who believe in serving their communities with integrity and professionalism. I unequivocally condemn the actions of those officers, which are a stain on the policing profession and foster fear and a mistrust in law enforcement.

"There is never a time when an officer should utilize the tactics we saw in that video, because they directly contradict a law enforcement officer's most basic obligation: to protect human life. In Massachusetts, municipal police officers are specifically trained not to use the methods that contributed to the death of Mr. Floyd.

"As an accredited agency, all members of the Essex Police Department undergo consistent and rigorous training meant to equip them with the skills to carry out their duties fairly and impartially, with an emphasis on de-escalating conflict, recognizing mental health challenges and appreciating diversity. We also train on procedural justice and police legitimacy.

"I stand with those who have mobilized to peacefully protest the actions of the police officers who failed to live those values, and join them in demanding that those officers be held accountable for their failure to uphold their most basic duty."

The Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, representing Police Chiefs in all 351 cities and towns and most college campuses has also denounced the egregious actions taken by four members of the Minneapolis Police Department that resulted in the death of George Floyd on May 25. Massachusetts Police Officers have thoroughly embraced the six pillars of the principles embodied in the final report of President Barack Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, and remain committed to professional conduct, democratic policing and procedural justice for all people.

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