



April 14, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Yesterday, the Grand Rapids Police Department released video footage showing their brutal execution of Patrick Lyoya, a 26-year-old unarmed Black man. The deadly encounter began with a traffic stop for an alleged minor violation on April 4, 2022. This "violation" ended with a white police officer callously and viciously ending Mr. Lyoya's life by shooting him in the back of the head as he lay face down while the officer straddled his back.

Police brutality does not happen in a silo. The continued use of excessive and unwarranted force against Black people is enabled by fatal flaws in our institutions including inadequate laws, entrenched police impunity, unequal distribution of power, and profound bias in systemic decision making. In Michigan, the state-sponsored execution of Mr. Lyoya may be viewed as first-degree murder under Michigan state law,¹ a hate crime under Michigan's Penal Code,² and a violation of several federally protected civil rights.³

Federally, passing the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act is a step in the right direction that would reform qualified immunity, prohibit racial profiling, and deter excessive force by law enforcement.⁴ Additionally, we urge the Michigan legislature to adopt similar legislation to reinforce accountability methods statewide, and for the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards to improve training procedures. Law enforcement officers who have been terminated due to police misconduct should not be able to work in law enforcement again. Locally, the Grand Rapids City Commission needs to act swiftly and hold their officers accountable for their improper actions and misconduct.

We must confront society's tolerance of racism. Our lives, freedom, and communities should not be dehumanized, forsaken, or eroded, especially by state-sponsored terror forces. Mr. Lyoya's senseless execution now adds to the innumerable killings of Black people by the police. There must be a sharpened focus on instituting necessary and overdue policy change to rectify our nation's insidious policing system.

The National Black Law Students Association and the Midwest Region of the National Black Law Students Association demand that the officer who executed Patrick Lyoya be immediately terminated, arrested, and prosecuted for his violent and callous killing of this young, unarmed Black man. Justice cannot be delayed.

In NBLSA Service,

The 55th National Board of Directors
National Black Law Students Association (NBLSA)

CC: Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Northeast Southern, Southwest, and Western Regions of the National Black Law Students Association

¹ See MCL 750.316.

² See MCL 750.147b.

³ See generally 42 U.S.C. §§ 14141, 2000d, 3789d.

⁴ See George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, H.R. 1280, 117th Congress (2021).