



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement of the NAACP Greater Indianapolis Branch 3053 on Recent Violence in Our Community

INDIANAPOLIS — September 11, 2019 — The Greater Indianapolis NAACP Branch President Chrystal Ratcliffe issued the following statement today on the recent violence in our community:

The Greater Indianapolis branch of the NAACP shares in the community's grief in the loss of the two teenage siblings murdered the morning of Aug. 23. Nicholas Nelson, 16, and Ashlynn Nelson, 15, were students at Lawrence North High School. This senseless act of violence on such young lives is simply deplorable. In situations of youth-on-youth violence, there are no real winners. There is just unrealized potential. Our branch further extends its prayer and condolences to the families impacted by the tragedy.

The Greater Indianapolis branch of the NAACP is deeply troubled by the two videos showing IMPD officer Robert Lawson using excessive force against a Shortridge High School student. Officer Lawson's conduct was reprehensible and is not indicative of the standards we expect of any officer of the IMPD. This type of behavior was definitely not a part of the officer's training and only creates hostilities between the community and the entire police department. If Officer Lawson had utilized the department's de-escalation training, the resulting encounter would have had a markedly different outcome.

It is the branch's expectation for the IMPD to fully investigate this encounter. We recommend that Chief Roach use all necessary measures to ensure Officer Lawson knows such behavior is never tolerable in an officer sworn to protect the community.

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About NAACP: The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest, largest and most widely recognized civil rights organization. Our mission is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights for all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination.