

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NAACP Statement on Indianapolis Police Shooting of Aaron Bailey

INDIANAPOLIS, June 30, 2017 -- In response to the fatal shooting early Thursday morning of 45-year-old Aaron Bailey, an unarmed black man, by an officer in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, Greater Indianapolis NAACP President Chrystal Ratcliffe issued the following statement today:

"Use of excessive force by law enforcement officers can no longer be tolerated in our communities. The lack of accountability erodes trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve which impedes the ability to solve crime," Mrs. Ratcliffe said. "The NAACP is committed to a proactive approach to police shootings and all other forms of police brutality. Our solution to this egregious problem is accountability.

"It is a human and civil rights issue. When there are no systems for accountability, safety is affected and anyone can be a victim. Let Indianapolis be the last time people lose their lives and families are terrorized by a police force without accountability. Law enforcement accountability means safer communities for us all."

The NAACP Indianapolis leadership, community leaders, faith leaders and concerned citizens are calling for:

1. A credible investigation into the incident and accountability for the law enforcement officer's actions.
2. Establishment of a civilian review board with subpoena power
3. The U.S. Department of Justice to launch a full criminal and "pattern and practice" investigation into the Indianapolis police force, which has experienced a rash of police shootings in the past 10 years.
4. Congress to enact legislation to mandate official standards for and training in the use of force for all law enforcement officers. Congressman John Conyers, Chair of the House Judiciary Committee, has introduced the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A study of police use of force in Texas found that force was used against African American citizens twice as often as against white citizens; Hispanic citizens experienced 25% more incidents of police use of force.

Justice Department statistics show federal prosecutors are pursuing more abuse cases in which law enforcement officers allegedly used excessive force. Prosecutors filed 281 such cases from 2001 to 2007, up from 224 in the previous seven years.

Police brutality in the United States affects people of all ages, races and backgrounds:

- In Texas, a 72-year-old white great grandmother was tasered after apparently speeding in construction zone.
- In Pennsylvania, an unarmed 12-year-old African American boy was shot in the back as he was running away from state troopers
- In Maryland, the white mayor of a suburban town had his house stormed by police and his dogs killed.

The NAACP Greater Indianapolis Branch believes a civilian review board with subpoena and disciplinary powers can create the necessary accountability for the Indianapolis police force.

"It is appropriate that in conferring the police with powers, particularly the power to use lethal force, that civilians have a role in determining the standards by which they are policed," Mrs. Ratcliffe said.

An independent civilian review board affords citizens with an opportunity to engage in that role by providing a venue through which to air grievances, express concerns, and voice recommendations.

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