



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN



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Statement from the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women
Regarding the murder of George Floyd and ongoing racial violence

We are shocked and heartbroken at the depraved killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis. This death of a defenseless Black man by a White police officer comes on the heels of the killing of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and so many – too many -- others, as well as the weaponizing of the police by a White woman against a Black man, Christian Cooper, who was birdwatching in Central Park last week. We are writing today on behalf of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women to express our shared grief about these national events at a time our own communities are already reeling from the pandemic.

COVID-19 has laid bare the long-standing racial inequities in our society that have contributed to our communities of color being disproportionately harmed by the virus due to longstanding inequities in health care, economic disparities, and the fact that a disproportionate number of people of color are our essential workers. These repeated injustices also substantially impact the lives of women, who have lost more jobs than men during the pandemic and are shouldering more of the burdens imposed by the virus from childcare to home schooling, elder care and household chores.

What is happening on the national scene highlights other inequities in our society. Our Black neighbors and friends have to fear just walking down the sidewalk, taking a jog, driving a car, going birdwatching. While our White neighbors and friends take these things for granted and most often do not even recognize their white privilege.

As a Commission there is much that we can do to stand in solidarity with those protesting police brutality and racism. We will continue the work we have already begun to support legislation and policy that focus on issues that Black women and women of color are advocating for. We appreciate the support that we can all give to each other in these challenging times. We need to move forward with an understanding that racism is an issue for all of us to address together, and not for some of us to shoulder alone.

Nina Kimball
MCSW Chair

Denella Clark
Vice-Chair