



- OFFICE OF THE MAYOR -
Chasity Wells-Armstrong
City of Kankakee

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Mayor Wells-Armstrong Responds in Light of George Floyd's Death and Recent Protests

Kankakee, IL - In the past week, George Floyd, yet another unarmed black man in the United States has died at the hands of a white police officer who knelt on his neck for nearly nine minutes while ignoring the pleas of Mr. Floyd who repeatedly stated, "I can't breathe." Additionally, the officer stared at the crowd with his hand in his pocket while continuously applying pressure to Mr. Floyd's neck despite public outcry from spectators.

Mayor Chasity Wells-Armstrong is serving as the first black mayor proudly representing a diverse community in her hometown. Mayor Wells-Armstrong stated: "It is absolutely abhorrent and heart-breaking to continuously witness a pattern of violence toward black men in this country who are targeted by law enforcement officers. These heinous acts committed by these officers demonstrates a lack of regard for the humanity and dignity of our black men.

The response to this violence must come from all of us who profess to be God-fearing, fair and decent human beings. It can no longer be a 'black issue' as this is an American issue.

All of us want to live in communities where our relationships with our police officers are strong; where we work in partnership to reduce and solve crimes; and where our kids and families feel safe.

Ending this cycle of police brutality will require true leaders who are willing to acknowledge the racism that is embedded in the American criminal justice system and work for the betterment of humankind. In my city, I am fortunate to have many officers who exemplify the highest standards associated with the badge they wear every day. We make efforts to diversify our police department so that our department reflects the community. We promote activities where residents and officers are able to build relationships with one another. And we provide incentives for officers to live in the City so they can take ownership of the neighborhoods they police.

Lastly, these incidents are leaving a lasting impact of trauma on victims, families and communities. And hurt people, hurt people. We see it in the outrage of protesters across this country. Black people have been shown time and again that the criminal justice system was not created for their benefit. It harms them; it fails them, and sometimes, it kills them.

Therefore, allies from all walks of life are needed to bring real change. Black people are tired. My question is, who will stand with us for the duration of this fight? Peaceful protests are a step toward change; however, additional measures must be taken to have more impact. Now is the time for us to make a stand TOGETHER against racism and create a new history that makes all Americans proud."