

# New Hampshire Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers

June 5, 2020

## Statement from the NHACDL Board on Police Brutality and Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice System

As criminal defense attorneys, we bear witness to the racism our clients face from all areas of society. We must speak out.

According to a statement by the Innocence Network, “Between 2013 and 2019, police violence in the United States led to the deaths of 7,666 people most of them Black Americans. The number of police killings in the country disproportionately affects Black people, who are three times as likely as white Americans to be killed by the police. In 8 of the 100 largest cities in the United States, police departments kill Black men at higher rates than the U.S. murder rate itself. It makes no difference the crime rate of the city – levels of violent crime in U.S. cities do not determine rates of police violence. And rarely is there ever any accountability. In 99% of the cases where an officer killed a civilian between 2013 – 2019, the officer was not charged with a crime.”<sup>1</sup>

The criminal justice system also perpetuates the oppression and discrimination of black people through implicit bias, systems of bail and detention, racial profiling, pre-textual stops and the so-called “War on Drugs.” This system has resulted in the disproportionate incarceration of black men and women from our communities. The presumption that Black people in our communities are dangerous and guilty must end.

We affirm that Black Lives Matter. NHACDL stands in solidarity with the Black community and other communities of color in their struggle against racism in this nation. We are committed to joining with public defenders, civil legal aid, and civil rights organizations to build partnerships to find effective solutions to combat racism and police brutality.<sup>2</sup>

Now is a time to speak, but also a time to listen. We, as an organization, commit to providing a forum for discussions about how race affects our clients and our practice as criminal defense lawyers. We welcome suggestions on speakers and topics. These conversations may not be easy, but they are necessary. We are here to listen and act. The time is now.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://innocencenetwork.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nlada.org/node/32531>

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