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Texas Criminal Justice Coalition Statement on Police Murder of Daunte Wright
*Advocates Urge Leaders to Think Beyond Harmful Policing and Corrections Systems
and Invest in Proven, Community-Based Solutions*

AUSTIN, TX — After a year of near-constant traumas for Black and brown Americans—from particularly deadly COVID-19 outcomes, especially in prisons and jails, to a series of high-profile murders by police—another devastating murder has rocked the United States. Near the site of Derek Chauvin’s trial in Minneapolis for his killing of George Floyd, 20-year-old Daunte Wright was murdered by a police officer after being pulled over for a traffic violation.

Mr. Wright’s murder is another horrific example of the ways in which the criminal legal system, built on the blueprint of slavery, ensnares Black and brown Americans with often deadly outcomes. Daunte Wright was killed after officers discovered a warrant for his arrest for missing a court date. This is not a dangerous crime punishable by death, yet a veteran officer’s inability to use her training and experience to appropriately discharge the correct weapon resulted in the loss of life.

“Black and brown communities are already on pins and needles as Derek Chauvin stands trial for the murder of George Floyd. The murder of Daunte Wright only adds to the growing trauma we face every day,” said **Cynthia Simons, Women’s Fellow with the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC)**. “When police murder civilians—and when violence is perpetuated through arrest, incarceration, and correctional control—entire communities face the collateral consequences of that brutality. These consequences follow our communities for centuries and only fuel racial tension between law enforcement and Black and brown communities.”

In Texas, recent stories of Black and brown men murdered by police and detention officers have left loved ones and communities reeling. After being arrested for a low-level marijuana charge and taken to the hospital for what appeared to be mental health issues, Marvin Scott III was restrained and pepper sprayed, and Collin County Jail detention officers covered his face with a spit hood. He died that night at the age of 26. In Austin, Javier Ambler II, Mike Ramos, and Alex Gonzalez have all been murdered by police in the past two years. Mr. Ambler’s death was filmed for the television show *Live PD*. Mr. Ramos was driving away from police when they killed him. Mr. Gonzalez was murdered next to his car by an off-duty officer, with his baby in the backseat.

During testimony for Texas’ George Floyd Act (HB 88) during the state’s current legislative session, family members of people murdered and brutalized by police officers took the podium to testify, centering their trauma and the suffering that this violence has brought to communities across the state. In that testimony, as in so many of the stories of Black and brown men murdered by police, it was often mothers who shared their grief.

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“These stories are about much more than a single act of violence,” **Ms. Simons** said. “This is a women’s issue because it is our sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers who are dying. This type of trauma is destabilizing, feeding into substance use disorders and emotional outbursts that only end up trapping more Black and brown people in the system. It fuels intergenerational trauma for our families and communities, and its effect on women of color is both complex and profound.”

Although the resignations, firings, and arrests of law enforcement officers involved in these violent acts are a step towards accountability, they do not equate to justice being served. For families and communities across the state and country, their trauma is pervasive and ongoing. And without intentional change, encounters with law enforcement will only continue to result in harmful outcomes that cultivate and maintain bias, profiling, and trauma. It is critical to normalize positive engagement and a holistic approach to healing.

Last year, as Mr. Floyd’s murder garnered national attention, the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) staff and Board collaborated on an [organizational statement](#) about the relationship between police violence and mass incarceration. They wrote:

“Although this moment represents a collective social acknowledgment of the harms perpetuated by policing and corrections systems, it is also the result of generations’ worth of frustration and fear. Repairing the historic and persistent harm done to communities of color—in particular, the Black community—by a justice system rooted in inequality will not happen overnight, nor soon enough. For many Texans, the feeling of being unprotected or outright endangered by our system of “public safety” is not the product of a single encounter; it is the culmination of countless damages, disadvantages, and destructions inflicted upon entire communities.”

As the Texas Legislature continues to hear from Texans who have been harmed by the bloated and ineffective criminal legal system, advocates reiterate the fact that violence is not solved but compounded by this system. In addition to working with partners in support of the George Floyd Act, TCJC is continuing to challenge leaders to [rethink funding](#) that prolongs harm to Texans through punitive policies and systems, and is instead urging lawmakers to move valuable state dollars into community-based solutions that promote stability and success.

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The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition (TCJC) advances solutions and builds coalitions to end mass incarceration and build safer Texas communities. To learn more about TCJC, visit www.TexasCJC.org.