FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
PRESS ADVISORY
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Legislative Black Caucus Calls for an End to Looting and Makes Demands to Ensure Communities Survive Destruction

Chicago — Members of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus will be holding a press conference on Tuesday June 2, 2020 at Grand Boulevard Plaza, 5401 S. Wentworth Ave. at 2:00 p.m. to call for an end to looting, mass destruction and violence that has plagued our communities the past couple of days in response to the death of Minneapolis resident George Floyd and to call on special unified response from elected officials, neighbors and all as we work to rebuild our communities and to come up with short and long term solutions to the systemic setbacks in our community as well as police violence.

Who: IL Legislative Black Caucus
When: Tuesday June 2, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.
Where: Grand Boulevard Plaza, 5401 S. Wentworth Ave. Chicago IL

Members of the Legislative Black Caucus will address the media and community in an effort to help curb the senseless acts of violence that are destroying vulnerable communities, businesses and resources at a time when the city was just preparing to rebound from COVID 19. They will also detail a list of recommendations and emergency demands on behalf of communities in Chicago and across the state who are most in need of resources and healing at this time.

For more information or to schedule interviews please contact: Sonya Harper, sonya.harper@gmail.com (773) 680 - 7953

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"COVID-19 was not done showing us just how deep the inequities in our country are before we had another series of Black murders at the hands of racists in the headlines. It is exhausting to feel like you have been yelling at the top of your lungs for years without being heard, and I am deeply pained for our people forced to live in fear in the very country they helped build," Senate Majority Leader Kimberly A. Lightford (D-Maywood) said. "I extend a call to action to my colleagues in the Illinois General Assembly and legislators across the country to hear the ache in the hearts of those who are fed up. We can only move forward by coming together to ensure every individual’s basic human rights are protected."

We the members of the ILBC also recognize and call our allies to understand that the ability to weaponize ones race while demonizing another at will as seen in the Christian Cooper incident in Central Park leads to a biased legal system and is reminiscent of distorted accusations upon Blacks for centuries exploiting another dynamic of inequity. Being liberal is no longer enough in the face of these injustices, when we are still willing to use racial lens to validate questionable acts. These microagressions lead to the macroagressions that ultimately result in the continuous libations that must be poured as Blacks are endlessly being murdered in the “land of the free”.

“These incidents where Black people were murdered show an utter disregard for life and it’s clear that certain individuals are unjustly held above the law. We have officers in our communities that are doing the work to help our children and keep us safe, but their reputation is also threatened by police officers that commit murder and state’s attorneys that are complicit in those crimes,” House Majority Leader Jehan Gordon-Booth (D-Peoria) said. “We stand committed to the healing of our communities through vast reform and investments that lead them to prosper.”

The ILBC also expresses our sincerest sympathies to the Arbery and Floyd families who have had to witness and experience these unspeakable tragedies of their loved ones let alone; but with a nation watching as well.

Representative Camille Y. Lilly (ILBC House Chair/D-Chicago) stated “We need to build bridges that bring about meaning on how we survive together as human beings. We, the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus, stand together in calling on all legislators across America to eradicate these pandemics in black and brown communities across the United States. Building bridges with meaning in times of crisis, will turn us around as a human race. By putting an end to hatred, by putting an end to inequities, by putting an end to health disparities, by putting an end to injustices, by putting an end to poverty, and finally putting an end to discriminatory policies and violence we can only build a better world.”

“George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and so many others did not want to die!” said Chairman Lilly.

The never-ending story of indifference and negligence regarding civil liberties and life based on skin color can no longer be tolerated. The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus joins in the outcry for justice and accountability of restitutionary proportions in the cases of Ahmaud Arbery and George Floyd, the kind of justice that brings faith back to the notion “that all men are created equal.”

The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus established in 1968 is one of the oldest standing black caucuses in the United States even predating the foundation of the Congressional Black Caucus. The primary mission of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus is “to assure that the interests of African American citizens are given equitable representation in the General Assembly and that legislative action is directed to address those interests.”

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THE ILLINOIS LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS LAMENTS HOW MANY MORE NAMES MUST BE SAID

A response to the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, and Community Unrest

Springfield, IL-June 1st, 2020-The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus laments at “how many more names must be said?” in the wake of the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, and George Floyd. After returning to their respective communities throughout the state of Illinois from a special legislative session in Springfield fighting for equity and social safety nets in a budget that has been ravished by the COVID-19 pandemic, the ILBC was confronted with yet another sobering reality in the national headlines.

We refuse to remain silent, as the impacts of systemic racism and lack of accountability relative to the criminal justice system continues to lead to the senseless killings of Blacks throughout our beloved nation. Please note, it is not the intent of the ILBC to cast aspersions on the vast majority of police officers who put their lives on the line daily to serve and protect the citizens within their respective communities. Yet, we are determined and will be deliberate in rooting out the bad actors in the criminal justice system. As Former ILBC Member, The Honorable Harold Washington once stated; “Our concern is to heal, our concern is to bring together.” The members of the ILBC have been committed to that endeavor not withstanding partisan lines; to build safer communities and to dismantle the institutional policies that have been established since the repealing of the Black Laws of 1865. However, we rise in sheer outrage at these blatant attacks on Black citizens. The utter disregard shown for life in these incidents where individuals believed they were above laws that have been legislated or felt no answerability to the laws that they were sworn to serve based on race is deplorable.

“In 1903, the great black scholar, W.E.B. Dubois, stated “The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line. Here we stand in 2020, fighting for justice and equality because of that very same issue, the color line. That said, please understand this is not just ‘our’ problem, but rather, it is a ‘we’ problem. I am calling on my fellow legislators to stand with the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus to denounce this system of racial injustice that injures, destroys and kills not only people of color, but the very fabric of the American tapestry”; stated Senator Christopher Belt (ILBC Senate Co-Chair/D-Centerville)”

We understand the unrest across the nation and throughout communities within Illinois, as we also have to lift up names such as; Breonna Taylor in Kentucky who was simply lying in her own home when police entered and she too was murdered. These continued actions have created immeasurable anger and pain throughout the Black community and while we encourage everyone’s ability to exercise their First Amendment rights. The ILBC is hopeful that these protests remain peaceful and that participants are safe while maintaining social distancing with face masks during this ever-present COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to honor the lives that have been taken and amplify the voice for fairness not destruction. Based on recent events by individuals attempting to usurp the movement and divert the real conversation, the ILBC encourages citizens to promote personal safety by staying indoors if possible.