

January 20, 2015

The Latino Policy Forum and the undersigned, stand in unity with the community pursuing policy changes that will end the unnecessary use of lethal force by law enforcement against predominately Black youth.

The video of Laquan McDonald being shot dead by a Chicago police officer has evoked a wide range of emotions for people across this country: sadness; fury; fear; frustration. We revere those who serve in law enforcement with dignity and honor. Yet, the public trust has been violated and changes are in order—in Chicago and around the country. It is essential that law enforcement agencies and other units of government reexamine existing policies, procedures, mechanisms for oversight and means of accountability.

While young Black youth have been the primary victims of the unnecessary, avoidable use of lethal force by law enforcement, they are not alone. Latinos and youth from other communities of color have been subjected to similar circumstances across the nation. However, it is necessary to acknowledge that Black youth face a unique set of circumstances that warrant the unequivocal, unwavering proclamation that Black lives matter.

Chicago is widely regarded as one of the most segregated cities in America. In the Latino community, there's often a desire to establish stronger connections between Black and Latino communities in order to pursue common interests and lend support to each other's endeavors. That space exists in pockets, but it is not nearly as commonplace as it should be. We are well aware that our communities have political, economic and social interests that can be mutually advanced and that such advancement cannot and should not come at the expense of one another.

In times like this, it is imperative not to be a 'silent' ally. Injustice for Black youth is an injustice for everyone. Authentic, meaningful support requires that people step back from their own immediate perspectives and examine the circumstances that victims of injustice find themselves within our shared society. We must seek understanding rather than judgment, empathy rather than callousness and unity instead of division.

As we seek to address the myriad of social and economic challenges that confront the Latino community and other communities of color, we recognize that we do not traverse the social and political landscape in isolation. We will not silently retreat to a safe space while our Black brothers and sisters suffer from unmistakable sets of injustice.

We, the undersigned, are firm in our proclamation that Black lives matter.

We are honored to be allies to those advancing reform.

We are proud to be on the side of justice.

Sincerely,

Latino Policy Forum

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