

Department of Government, New Mexico State University
Statement Denouncing Police Brutality and in Support of Protesters

June 5, 2020

The Department of Government at New Mexico State University is committed to promoting a just and inclusive society, in which all people are valued and discrimination of any kind is unacceptable. We the faculty therefore add our collective voice to the widespread denunciation of systemic police brutality toward African Americans that has led to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and all the other innocent victims killed over many years by racist law enforcement officers, too often with legal impunity and the reflexive support of their departments.

We condemn as well those political leaders on whose watch these outrages have been taking place for far too long, and admonish that segment of the American public that for decades has demonstrated bland apathy when sharp attention is required. Americans must come to understand once and for all that All Lives Matter Only When Black Lives Matter.

Moreover, the NMSU Government Department faculty collectively express our strong and unwavering support for the hundreds of thousands of protestors across the US who are risking their safety, and even their lives, to stand up for justice and decency in the face of systemic police brutality. Additionally, we offer our gratitude to the many thousands more around the world who are marching in solidarity with American protesters.

We also send our heartfelt condolences to the families of the slain—martyrs all—and join in the sacred call for justice, peace, equality and respect for our African American sisters and brothers, along with all who face persecution and violence in America.

The pattern of bloody police behavior attests to Michael Lipsky's argument about "the decisions of street-level bureaucrats (i.e. police, teachers, counselors and social workers), the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures that effectively become the public policies they carry out." But without clear-cut anti-discrimination rules and procedures, this discretion implicitly gives law enforcement officers the license to violently act on their own biases. Hence, we call for comprehensive reform that equips public administration at the front lines with neutrality and high professionalism, which is essential to help prevent the abuse and murder of African Americans and others in ongoing mortal danger at the hands of bigoted law officers.

The road before us is rocky and steep—there are many who are, as Dr. Martin Luther King lamented, "more devoted to order than to justice," and it will be hard work to convince them that only justice can bring lasting order. We invite Government Department students and staff, as well as students, faculty, staff, and administrators throughout NMSU, to participate with your passion, knowledge and skills to help transform this tragic and dangerous historical

moment into one of collective empowerment and social transformation, in which racism and all other forms of discrimination have no place.