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## CCDLA Executive Board Statement on Minneapolis and Our Support of Systemic Change In The Criminal Justice System

June 2, 2020

Criminal defense attorneys across the state of Connecticut have seen the violence, degradation, and destruction wrought on individuals and communities of color by a brutal and punitive criminal justice system. Recent events in our country, most recently in Minneapolis, continue to demonstrate that people of color are not afforded the presumption of innocence nor the due process of law that are constitutional birthrights.

The Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (CCDLA) denounces acts of hate, violence, and discrimination that violate constitutional rights, stifle social justice, and undermine the rule of law. The CCDLA stands with those who face hate, violence, and discrimination based on any protected status including the color of one's skin.

Our mission, and that of all criminal defense attorneys, is to preserve and promote the core values of America's justice system guaranteed by the Constitution – among them due process, freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, fair sentencing and assistance of effective counsel – by educating the public and the legal profession to the role of these rights and values in a free society. We vow to continue to do that.

We condemn the death of George Floyd at the hands of law enforcement by the four Minneapolis police officers. We condemn the deaths of the hundreds of people of color who have been unjustly killed by police over the last decade. We also condemn those incidents of racial and social inequalities, violence, and hate that infect our state and our country.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. once said that “he who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it.” With those inspirational words in mind, the CCDLA celebrates and supports those who lawfully protest these injustices. We denounce illegal police practices, and we will continue to advocate for systemic change in the criminal justice system. We will work with community leaders, elected officials, government leaders and the law enforcement community to ensure we live up to the promise and ideals upon which this country was founded.

The CCDLA is a well-respected voice in the Connecticut state legislature, submitting testimony annually on bills important to the criminal defense community. To that end, the CCDLA hereby demands the Connecticut General Assembly to hold a special session to discuss reforms like mandatory body cameras and FOIA requests applying to officer personnel files. We ask our members and the public at large to contact their legislators and support criminal justice reforms.

Inequality in justice is injustice.