

For Immediate Release

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NAACP Calls for Reform in Wake of Failed Action to Discipline Officers Involved in Aaron Bailey Police Shooting in Indianapolis

INDIANAPOLIS -- May 11, 2018 -- In response to the Civilian Police Merit Board decision to not support the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Chief's recommendation of the termination of Officer Denison and Officer Howard for the fatal shooting of 45-year-old Aaron Bailey, an unarmed black man, Greater Indianapolis NAACP President Chrystal Ratcliffe issued the following statement today:

"Our organization finds it very disturbing that the Merit Board did not conclude that the two officers' conduct on the morning of June 29th does not constitute a terminable offense. Withstanding the recommendation of a 30-year veteran police chief and the supporting fact finding of the two officers' peers on the Police Firearms Board that the officers failed to follow established lethal force policies and procedures, it raises serious concerns within our community as to what is the litmus test for finding an officer's actions terminable. Decisions like these erode the trust of the community and call into question whether the accountability to the community is merely superficial when an officer violates established police procedures."

Mrs. Ratcliffe further stated, "The NAACP is committed to a proactive approach to police shootings and is committed to being a part of the solution to this egregious problem. It is our desire to assist in creating an optimal model of law enforcement accountability, which will strengthen the core of establishing safer communities for us all."

The NAACP Indianapolis leadership is calling for:

1. An evaluation of the Merit Board's review standards for when an officer's conduct in the use of lethal force will sustain a recommendation for termination;

2. Establishing a dialogue with all stakeholders -- including the Fraternal Order of Police, Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, and the Mayor's office -- in establishing best practices for use of lethal force;
3. Allowing for the community to provide amicus briefs to the Merit Board when an officer's conduct in use of lethal force leads for a call for termination;
4. The creation of a special attorney whose role is to represent the community in actions where an officer's conduct from a use of lethal force calls for termination;
5. Action by the Indiana General Assembly, particularly our Marion County lawmakers, to enact legislation to change the statutory standards for the use of deadly force by law enforcement;
6. Action by the Indianapolis City-County Council to begin reviewing lethal force uses, procedures, and practices to include public comments, expert testimony from professionals, and examination of other cities' and municipalities' best practices.

The NAACP believes that with full transparency, a commitment to due process, and coming to the table with proactive solutions, Indianapolis can learn from this tragedy and become a national model for successful interactions between law enforcement and the community it protects.