



John P. Morris
Black Law Students Association

*“To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious
is to be in a rage almost all the time.”*

- James Baldwin (novelist, poet, activist)

To ASU Law and our Phoenix Community,

We, the Black Law Students Association at ASU Law, stand in solidarity with Dion Johnson, George Floyd, and all of the other lives lost to police brutality. Both men, murdered on Memorial Day, deserve swift justice.

We are waiting. George Floyd was murdered in Minneapolis, sparking protests in all 50 states. On the same day, an eerily similar incident took place right in our own backyard. Dion Johnson was shot and killed by an Arizona Department of Public Safety trooper while asleep in his car. Unfortunately for those seeking justice, his murder was not caught on film. Dion’s family and community have yet to receive any answers regarding his death. We can no longer sit by idly and hope that those responsible for his death will be held accountable.

We are walking. As a Black-oriented organization here at ASU, we feel a particular sense of urgency to speak, protest, donate, and call in support of this cause. The murders of people like George Floyd and Breonna Taylor were senseless acts of hate. These acts of hate are symptoms of the disease plaguing our nation and transmitted by lawless police officers. We are exercising all forms of resistance to bring about change. **We are calling ASU Law, and ASU in general, to stand behind their diverse students and release a statement that condemns the murders of George Floyd and Dion Johnson.**

We are weeping. We see George and Dion in our fathers, brothers, husbands, and in ourselves. As the nation grieves for George, we take a small comfort in the fact that at a minimum, his death will not be forgotten. The officers involved in his murder have all been fired and now face criminal charges. The sad reality is, however, that this move towards accountability is the exception, not the norm. This must change. Dion Johnson may never obtain justice because we do not have footage of his death. Arizona maintains impermissibly loose body cam standards for law enforcement, allowing officers to choose when to wear the surveillance devices. We must demand better of our leaders. BLSA recognizes the work our institution has done to combat

injustice and would like to see those efforts expanded to include more student input. There's an unsettling irony to the fact that the law students from communities that social justice work aims to uplift are often prevented from taking such positions by financial barriers. **BLSA asks for your support in developing projects that combat racial inequality both on and off-campus. For a start, we would like funding for student research of legal solutions to police brutality and to see the development of need-based stipends to make social justice work accessible to students of color.** We also look forward to drafting sample legislation regarding body cameras.

Finally, we are working. Our pain from this system of oppression fuels our passion for entering the legal field. Attending law school is a privilege and responsibility that we do not take lightly. We offer ourselves as a resource to our community. We encourage those of you interested in joining the legal field or pursuing a law degree to reach out to us; we would love to speak with you. Many of us came to law school to bring about change in our communities of color and advocate for marginalized people. That starts now. Protests have sparked a dialogue that we can channel into meaningful legislation. We invite our administration, community partners, and peers to stand with us.

Thank you for your consideration. We respectfully look forward to your show of support.

In Solidarity,

The John P. Morris Black Law Students Association

A Message from BLSA Allies

We understand that the systematic racism and violence towards the Black community that occurs in our nation takes a toll on our colleagues. Despite this, they have taken the time and energy to use their voices to advocate for the community.

We support the BLSA and the general Black law student population at ASU. We support those who have acted, either through protesting, having conversations and bringing light to the issues at hand, or contributed monetarily to the Minnesota Freedom Fund and other organizations.

We demand accountability and justice for those affected. We condemn the actions taken by ADPS troopers, Minneapolis PD, and other officers. We condemn the actions of any individuals who perpetuate white supremacy ideology.

We voice our solidarity with the Black Law Student Association, the Black community in Phoenix, and the Black community across the nation.

Lastly, we would like to leave you with a quote from Michelle Alexander:

“In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. So we don’t. Rather than rely on race, we use our criminal justice system to label people of color ‘criminals’ and then engage in all the practices we supposedly left behind.”