



California Conference Board AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO



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Statement from Art Aguilar, Chairman, ATU's California Conference Board

Our country—the home we have always been encouraged to love and respect—lies broken and bleeding. Our President—the leader we have always been assured has our best interests and goals at heart—is both missing in action and, from his White House bunker, deliberately fanning the flames of hatred, ignorance and intolerance.

While more than 108,000 Americans have died from the still-unchecked coronavirus, ordinary, defenseless citizens—overwhelmingly black and brown—are assaulted and murdered, essentially because they *are* black and brown. While our national, state and local economies are tanking, and unemployment is at the level of the Great Depression—with more lost lives, jobs, savings and futures to come—law enforcement has become a dangerous sick joke: Elements of those who are supposed to *protect* us, are *killing* us.

The death of George Floyd, in Minneapolis, is far more than a needless, mindless tragedy: It is an indelible stain on our nation, our values, ourselves. It is an unmistakable road marker on the path to American societal convulsion, loss of national self-respect, and complete eclipse of our international pride, influence and leadership.

His murder is *beyond* a wrong that must be righted. His death is *beyond* another grim example of an issue that desperately needs to be addressed and fixed. It is a cancer in our national body, and it will kill us as surely as the coronavirus and the destruction of our planet.

And just as the completely understandable and necessary Black Lives Matter movement is a strong, daily reminder of past sins and the long way we still have to go in order to heal our poisonous racial/economic divide, so we must thoroughly grasp that the frustration and outrage of disadvantaged, marginalized and often *terrorized* citizens of our country is both justified and an outgrowth of hundreds of years of intolerance, hatred, ignorance and rabble-rousing fear.

Above all, let us not simply express outrage and despair, and then go back to our normal lives. We *must not* see what's happening, wring our hands, and then put the incident out of our minds until the next incident stirs us up again. These deaths, these protests, are not dots on a chart; they make up a pattern of mistreatment, prejudice, inequality and violence which we must overcome before those dark forces overcome *us*.

The ATU's California Conference Board, representing over 13,000 thousand hard-working, dedicated, frontline public transit professionals and their families, *condemns*—in the clearest, strongest-possible words and feelings—the wanton deaths of George Floyd and far too many other victims of law-enforcement overreaction and contempt for people's rights and lives. We abhor what our country is becoming, and fully and gratefully support Black Lives Matter and similar groups that are in the forefront, along with organized labor, in fighting this evil that threatens to destroy the country we have always thought of as a positive, special ideal and place.

In Solidarity,

Arturo E. Aguilar
Chairman of the CCB

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