



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

George Floyd was Murdered - Senator James Sanders Jr. Calls For Justice in Police Involved Death of Unarmed Minnesota Man

JAMES SANDERS JR. May 29, 2020



State Senator James Sanders Jr. said: "I am shocked, uphailed, disgusted, angered and saddened by the tragic death of George Floyd at the hands of Minnesota Police Officer Derek Chauvin. This was murder, plain and simple, and Chauvin should be prosecuted for this crime, which was caught on video for all to see. His fellow officers should also be charged for their participation. George Floyd was unarmed and pulled over by police after a store owner called them claiming Floyd allegedly tried to use counterfeit currency.

In the video, which is horrific and brings back memories of the Eric Garner case, Floyd is pinned to the ground with Chauvin pressing his knee on the man's throat while the victim can be repeatedly heard stating that he can't breathe. While the incident has sparked riots and violence by an outraged community, and even prompted President Trump to call on the FBI to take action and investigate the case, the insensitivity and ignorance of some is still being heard as Hal Marx, the Mayor of Petal, Mississippi tweeted "If you say you can't breathe, you're breathing. Most likely that man died of overdose or heart attack." No, George Floyd was an unarmed black man who died at the hands of a white officer, in what I believe was a racially motivated excessive use of force. As the victim's brother said, "I'm tired of seeing black men die."

As the COVID-19 pandemic tears through our communities, disproportionately affecting poor people and people of color, reminding us of the inequities in the healthcare system, the death of George Floyd reminds us of the inequities of the criminal justice system and how the lives of black and brown people are seen as less worthy than others. Yet, ironically, it is those very same people who make up the majority of essential and frontline workers, the very people who are saving the lives of so many others. The time to take a stand is now. We must demand equality for all. The COVID-19 pandemic has left us at a critical crossroad in history and we will be judged later for the actions we take now. We must stand together as people of good will and say enough is enough. We may be shut down, but we will not shut up. We will wear a mask to protect others from the coronavirus but we will not mask the virus of injustice against our brothers and sisters. We will, and we must, fight for racial equality.

As Mother Jones, the prominent union organizer, community organizer and activist so eloquently said, we must "pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living."