



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

## Statement by Senator Kavanagh on Violent Acts by Police Officers and Civil Unrest

BRIAN KAVANAGH May 30, 2020

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The killing of George Floyd in Minnesota and the subsequent unrest in cities across the nation, including here in New York City, illustrate just how painful and deep the wounds are between communities of color and our police departments. As indicated by the breadth of participation in protests in recent days, outrage over horrific incidents like this is not and should not be solely the province of communities of color.

I am both angered and heartbroken by the images of Mr. Floyd's death and the anguish it has caused. I am also extremely concerned about people's safety—especially the safety of Americans who are responsibly exercising their right to protest and police officers who are doing their jobs and working to keep the peace.

At moments like this—which come along with sad frequency—we find ourselves asking whether each of us has done enough. I am somewhat heartened that the NYPD is pursuing disciplinary charges related to the violent arrest of Donni Wright on the Lower East Side on May 2nd, but we must do more to ensure that such incidents are routinely investigated, and not just when a bystander records them.

It is evident that my colleagues and I in the State Legislature have much work to do to help facilitate the processes of accountability and healing that must occur if our state and our nation are to live up to our highest ideals of justice and equity and become whole.

Many of us have supported legislation to ensure fair and thorough investigations whenever there is a death as a result of interaction with the police or in police custody; to end unnecessary secrecy regarding the outcome of police misconduct and disciplinary processes; and to require all police departments to report demographic and geographic data on their enforcement activities, including low-level offenses. I will work with my colleagues—several of whom have shown extraordinary resolve and leadership on these issues—to push forward with these and other important bills.

My deepest condolences to Mr. Floyd's family, to all who are suffering as a result of his loss, and to all who are forced to relive the anguish they experienced in the wake of all too similar tragedies in the past. Let us honor his memory by working to address the inequities in our justice system and to improve the relations between our communities and the police. And let's do that work in a manner that embodies our aspirations for peace and mutual

understanding.

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