

Attorney General Gurbir Grewal
Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex
25 Market Street, P.O. Box 112
Trenton, NJ 08625

Governor Phil Murphy and Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver
Office of the Governor of New Jersey
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Town of Dover Mayor and Board of Alderman
37 N. Sussex Street
Dover, NJ 07801

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

RE: #JusticeForCyprian

Dear Governor Phil Murphy, Lieutenant Governor Sheila Oliver, Attorney General Gurbir Grewal, Dover Mayor James Dodd, and Dover Board of Aldermen:

We, the undersigned New Jersey residents and organizations, demand that our local and state government respond to the excessive use of force evidenced in video recordings of the Dover Police Department's arrest of Cyprian Luke.

The videos from the early morning of May 19, 2019 show several Dover police officers brutalizing nineteen-year-old Cyprian Luke. Officers were filmed choking and repeatedly punching a defenseless Cyprian Luke directly in the face. The recording concludes with officers dragging the teenager's beaten and limp body to an ambulance, and another officer slapping at the cellular phone used to record the violent arrest.

Our demands are guided by the restorative justice principles of truth, transparency, reparation, and reconciliation. Police officers should have the skills and cultural competence to protect and serve our communities without causing physical harm to our residents.

First, we seek truth. We demand an independent investigation into the source of the officer's or officers' reasonable suspicion to stop Cyprian Luke, to their probable cause to arrest Cyprian Luke, to the officers' use of force in effectuating that arrest, and to the medical care provided Cyprian Luke subsequent to the arrest. The Dover Public Safety Director, Dan DeGroot and the Dover Police Department Deputy, Justin Gabrys, are former Morris County Prosecutor's Office employees. The Morris County Prosecutor, Frederick Knapp, terminated efforts to implement community policing in our neighborhoods. Given the professional ties between the Dover Police Department and the Morris County Prosecutor's Office, and the failure to fully implement community policing in our towns, it is imperative that the investigation be reassigned to a truly independent prosecutor.

Second, we seek to prevent further harm. We demand: (i) an accounting of the use of force history of the officers seen on the video punching and choking Cyprian Luke; (ii) unpaid suspension during the investigation; (iii) reimbursement of any funds paid out to these officers to date since the commencement of their leave; and (iv) termination from the Dover Police Department. It adds insult to injury to force our community to pay the salaries of the very individuals who harmed us.

The officer who punched Cyprian Luke in the face was identified as Sergeant Michael Pier. Sgt. Pier is known amongst the Dover Community as one who uses excessive force. Sgt. Pier is already a defendant in the civil rights case of Kotz v. Pier for the alleged use of excessive force. In addition, the town of Dover has paid thousands in civil settlements due to Sgt. Pier's alleged actions causing the death of a motorist (Seitz v. Dover Police Officer Michael Pier et al., New Jersey Superior Court, Docket No. MRS-L-2441-09). We further demand to learn what, if any, preventative measures the Dover Police Department, the Dover Mayor and Board of Aldermen took to prevent police brutality, given Sgt. Pier's history. We also call for the unpaid suspension of Dover Police Officer Ilmi Bojkovic until the independent investigation is completed. Officer Ilmi Bojkovic can be seen in the video refusing to disclose his badge number and hitting the phone of a witness who has the legal right to record. Police officers are legally required to divulge their badge numbers. When it is determined which officer choked Cyprian Luke, we demand that officer's termination. The use of potentially deadly force on an unarmed teenager is absolutely unacceptable.

Third, we seek action to repair the harm done. We demand that the Attorney General update the New Jersey Attorney General's Use of Force Policy to ban the excessive force used against Cyprian. The Use of Force Policy has not been updated in almost twenty years. We demand the Attorney General mandate community policing policies across the state. Our state and local officials should instruct all police departments to end the violent practice of choking and punching residents, especially unarmed, teenage residents. Police departments, particularly the Dover Police Department, should be required to immediately implement the use of body cameras as well as testing for implicit bias. Independent review boards and additional training in de-escalation techniques are essential. State and local officials must establish standards and reporting of police use of force. Police officers must be immediately filmed making a statement after each use of force incident. We demand the training and hiring of a radically diverse police force that includes more women and people of color. Research demonstrates that female officers rely on a style of policing that uses less physical force, more often defusing and de-escalating potentially violent confrontations with residents. Finally, we demand the establishment of a community court, to re-engineer the way low-level cases are handled in municipal court.

We request that the impacted communities of Dover and Morristown, particularly our youth, be included in all steps toward reparation of the harm done by the violent arrest of Cyprian Luke. We welcome open dialogue to discuss and solve these problems collectively. We look forward to your response and appreciate your attention to our concerns.

Respectfully,

1. Black Lives Matter Morristown
2. Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
3. American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey
4. Kisha J. Pinnock, Esq., Morristown, NJ
5. Karol Y. Ruiz, Esq., Dover NJ
6. Heaven Walker, Rockaway, NJ
7. The Family of Cyprian Luke
8. Friends of Cyprian Luke of the Greater Morristown, NJ Area
9. LatinoJustice PRLDEF
10. Pastor Sidney Williams, of and with Bethel A.M.E. Church, Morristown, NJ
11. Pastor Robert C. Rogers, of and with Church of God in Christ For All Saints, Morristown, NJ
12. Rev. Alison B. Miller of and with the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, Morristown, NJ
13. Pastor Charles Perez, of Dover First United Methodist Church, Dover, NJ
14. Rev. Robert Gregson of and with Unitarian Universalist Faith Action NJ
15. Essex Rising
16. Urban League of Morris County
17. NAACP Morris County Branch
18. Rutgers Law School (Newark) National Lawyer's Guild
19. Delaware-New Jersey, National Lawyer's Guild
20. SOMA Justice
21. Newark Communities for Accountable Policing (NCAP)
22. Association of Black Women Lawyers of New Jersey
23. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of New Jersey
24. Lori Nessel Esq., Professor, Center For Social Justice, Seton Hall University School of Law
25. Jessica Miles Esq., Professor, Seton Hall University School of Law
26. Remy Pharr, Morristown NJ
27. Isaiah Pinnock, Morristown, NJ
28. Serena Findley, Morristown, NJ
29. Halashon Sianipar, Newark, NJ
30. Shayan Mirzahaidar, Newark, NJ
31. Laura Nicolette, Springfield, NJ
32. Melissa Contoleon, Jefferson, NJ
33. Teddy Contoleon, Jefferson, NJ
34. Fern Wolkin, Cedar Knolls, NJ
35. Noreen Staples, Brookside, NJ
36. Rhoda Myles

37. Tatiyana Salesman
38. Yolanda Harriot
39. Kiana Mitchell
40. Brittany Fuller, Dover, NJ
41. Rachelle Cruz, Mine Hill, NJ
42. Aura Heredia, Dover, NJ
43. Marilyn Blackman, Victory Gardens
44. Mary Washington
45. Jennifer Marcial, Dover, NJ
46. Melvin Marcial, Dover, NJ
47. Emily Kullman, Rockaway, NJ
48. Jacob Fugger, Medham, NJ
49. Orville McNally, Morristown, NJ
50. Kelly Montes, Vice President of Morristown Housing Authority Resident Advisory Board, Morristown, NJ
51. Estela Roibal, Dover, NJ
52. Enrique Roibal, Dover, NJ
53. Richard Hathaway, Morristown, NJ
54. Maria Chacon, Dover, NJ
55. Tiffany Lozo
56. Essence Johnson
57. Naya Jones, Morristown, NJ
58. Melissa Luke, Essex County, NJ
59. Maureen Luke, Essex County, Nj
60. Matthew Luke, Essex County NJ
61. Madison Murphy,
62. Shanell Harris, Boonton, NJ
63. Stacey Gregg, Rockaway, NJ
64. Dante Dunston
65. Brian Lozano, Dover NJ
66. Andres Lozano, Dover, NJ
67. Matt Skeete, South Orange
68. Justin Goldsman, West Orange
69. Lorena Inestroza, Morristown