



City of Seattle



**Date:** May 31, 2020

**To:** Mayor Jenny Durkan, City of Seattle Council, Seattle Police Department, Seattle Office of Civil Rights

**From:** City of Seattle LGBTQ Commission

**Re:** LGBTQ Commission Statement - Murder of George Floyd

The Seattle LGBTQ Commission stands with those protesting the murder of George Floyd and countless other black and brown people across this country, including the recent deaths in the City of Seattle of Charleena Lyles (6/18/2017) and Che Taylor (2/21/2016) at the hands of members of the Seattle Police Department.

To our community members holding rallies at Westlake Center, the Federal Courthouse, City Hall and other locations throughout the city, we hear you and support you, and join you in your call for justice. Our hope is to direct the City of Seattle to take immediate action to center the lives of black and brown citizens first in policy and action.

We aim to uplift your voice to be heard in the halls of Seattle city government, especially the voices of those most targeted by and vulnerable to oppression. As we enter Pride Month, we are also keenly aware of the fact that those within the Queer, Trans, Persons of Color Community experience and feel the trauma of these and intersecting oppressions strongest. We call on our siblings within the LGBTQ Community and allies of the LGBTQ community to utilize positions of relative privilege and oppression to build understanding and collective wisdom to combat the systemic barriers in judicial systems and policies.

We want to clearly reiterate our commitment to racial justice and to hold The Mayor's Office, Seattle City Council Members, City of Seattle Police Department, and City of Seattle departments accountable for actions that prevent the centering of, and cause harm to, black and brown people in policy and action.

These are important times for exercising our right to protest and peacefully assemble in order to ensure that these and other rights do not disappear forever. We are cognizant of the protests Pride Month is intended to commemorate. We will continue to work with community partners who are calling on the city to leave the Consent Decree in place and, at a minimum, codify and enforce the Police Accountability Ordinance passed by Council and signed by Mayor Durkan in 2017.

Actions steps that should be taken:

- Demilitarize downtown and Capitol Hill as not just a no weapons zone, but a no armed police zone. As we have seen in the past days, armed officers can have their guns taken from them which creates a clear public danger.
- De-escalate by removing or reducing police forces and riot police in downtown, this will decrease risk of harm to officers as well as the public. Life is more important than property.
- Mayor's Office, City Council, Office of Civil Rights, protesters, and organizers should hold immediate conversations for movement forward with the goal of creating actionable steps toward removing systemic barriers and protecting the lives of black and brown people first
- Listening sessions should immediately be scheduled by City Council Members, Mayor's Office, and city departments for all parts of the city so that our elected leaders can hear directly from the community
- Conversations from the LGBTQ and particularly the QTPOC communities within should be uplifted to truly hear about the lived experiences of these communities
- Call on City Council, the Community Police Commission, and local news media to investigate the Seattle Police Department's and Mayor Durkan's actions leading up to and during the protests, including the decision to request National Guard support from the Governor and to announce a 5pm curfew with mere minutes of notice.
- In providing these forums for conversations, be cognizant of appropriate ways to protect all and our most vulnerable communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Call on the Department of Justice to leave the Federal Consent Decree with the City of Seattle and Seattle Police Department in place
- Call on the City of Seattle to codify and enforce the Police Accountability Ordinance passed in 2017

The LGBTQ Commission serves as a conduit between our community and City Council and the Mayor's Office. We are ready to facilitate and assist with the difficult conversations ahead, so that we can move forward together.

Black Lives Matter, and peace without justice is not peace at all.

City of Seattle LGBTQ Commission - Executive Committee