



May 28, 2020

Dear Chapter Members:

In response to the killing of George Floyd by a Minneapolis Police Officer and the resulting protests in the Twin Cities, the Executive Committee of the Minnesota Dakotas Chapter of AILA wishes to make the following statement to our members.

Minnesota has a problem with structural racism that has long existed but has been made excruciatingly visible by the recent killing of George Floyd. A recent study by the U.S. Census Bureau showed that Minnesota has one of the worst rates of economic and racial disparities in the country. In the Twin Cities metro area, public schools are more segregated today than they were 20 years ago, with significant achievement gaps in schools that predominantly serve students of color.

On Tuesday morning, as video of George Floyd's arrest and struggle to breathe emerged, the systemic racism in this state was brought into stark relief. For many of our clients and for some of our members, families and staff who are people of color, the graphic video painfully brings up traumatic experiences that are all too familiar. This week's demonstrations and resulting riots and property damage in South Minneapolis have compounded the pain associated with George Floyd's death. As a chapter we renounce the killing of George Floyd and demand justice for him. We stand with the black community and organizers in Minnesota who have been our allies in pursuing immigration justice. We also stand with chapter members who have offices and homes in South Minneapolis and recognize the pain and complex feelings you may have right now, particularly if your office or home was damaged during this week's unrest.

As our city reels from these events and looks for a path forward, we call on our membership to step back and examine how we can do better. To ask ourselves, "What can I do to be a better ally to communities of color? Am I doing enough to promote anti-racism?"

We want to assure you all that, as leaders of this chapter, we are committed to asking those questions with you and to continuing the hard work of dismantling the structural racism that exists in Minnesota and across our country.

AILA Minnesota Dakotas 2020-2021 Executive Committee