



CONTACT: Austin Ruiz
(713) 800-0840
media@montrosecenter.org

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STATEMENT ON THE VERDICT IN THE TRIAL OF DEREK CHAUVIN

(HOUSTON, TX) – Last summer, in the wake of the brutal murders of Houstonian George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade and Black transgender women of color in Houston like Brandi Seals, Tracy Single (Williams), and Itali Marlowe, America began to reconcile its long history of systemic racism and racial inequality. Many across the country collectively came together to protest and affirm that Black Lives Matter.

As an organization, we immediately signed onto an open letter with over 300 national and statewide LGBTQ+ organizations condemning the violence that has claimed countless Black and Brown lives. In the spirit of the 51st anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, a fearless riot against police brutality, we outlined a series of actions that marked our renewed commitment to BLM, adopted a resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion that was passed by our Board of Directors, and are continually striving to meet our promised action in combating racial violence.

For the last few weeks, America—and the world—has closely watched as Derek Chauvin was put on trial for the murder of George Floyd. His murder renewed a movement that began in 2015, and made the world realize that it is not enough to simply not be racist, but that we all must be actively anti-racist. Only then will we be able to truly achieve racial equality across the country. Today, after only two days of deliberations, the jury has found Mr. Chauvin guilty on all charges; of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter.

Time and time again we have seen a lack of accountability in cases of police brutality. For far too long, our country has seen Black and Brown lives as dispensable and has taken them with impunity. While this verdict cannot bring back George Floyd, it is a relief to finally see justice served. We only hope that this is not a unique outlier, but rather, becomes the precedent. We hope this outcome will be a catalyst and spark continued change in the fight to dismantle systemic racism.

While Mr. Chauvin has been held accountable for the murder of George Floyd, we cannot ignore the fact that 20-year-old Daunte Wright and 13-year-old Adam Toledo were fatally shot by police while his trial was ongoing. We mourn their loss and hope that similar justice will be served for their families.

We will continue to speak out against racial inequality and police brutality, and we look forward to the day when we will not have to protest, march, and ask for accountability. Until then, we will continue to take action, we will continue to speak out, and we will continue to affirm that Black lives matter. Today, tomorrow, and every day.

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THE MONTROSE CENTER (www.montrosecenter.org)

Established in 1978 as a safe and affirming place for lesbian and gay Houstonians to receive counseling, the Montrose Center has emerged as one of the nation's leading full-service LGBTQ centers. Although counseling remains at the heart of what we do, services have expanded to meet the changing needs of our diverse community. These services include substance use disorder treatment, support and advocacy for LGBTQ survivors of violent crimes, care and assistance for people living with HIV, free community wellness programs and activities, and programs for our community's most vulnerable and isolated—youth and seniors. We sit at the center of the LGBTQ community and serve as a gathering place for LGBTQ organizations and groups. The Montrose Center is a United Way Agency.