



League of Women Voters of Alaska

P.O. Box 101345, Anchorage AK 99510

June 12, 2020

Dear Editor:

The League of Women Voters of Alaska (LWVAK) issued the following statement in response to the murder of George Floyd.

The members of LWVAK grieve over the loss of George Floyd. We mourn for the countless others who have lost their lives or found themselves injured both bodily and mentally by police brutality. We grieve for the baseless accusations made by those police who go about their job of policing while assuming that all persons of color are guilty of something and by those civilians who call police about bird watchers, joggers, park users, mothers, fathers, simply for the color of their skin.

We are a country built on racism and stolen land, land often tilled by those enslaved. We must look honestly at this history, for without that knowledge and understanding, we cannot heal and go forward. The process is painful if you are white, but necessary if change is to happen. When the phrase Black Lives Matter is countered with All Lives Matter, that response ignores the fact that throughout our history, to the powers that be, black and brown lives have mattered much less than white lives.

We are at a turning point now, and we must take the turn if our democracy is to thrive. When we call our governmental system a democracy, we should be talking about a system that gives all of its citizens equal rights regardless of skin color, ethnicity, gender, ability, religion, and place of origin. This talk must be backed up by action when needed to protect those rights. One of those rights is to be treated equally and fairly in encounters with police without the fear of physical harm. To this end, the League supports meaningful reform in policing and criminal justice practices while appreciating those police who have championed the rights of the people and the spirit of protest.

So how do we effect positive change? We use our right to peaceful assembly to let our leaders, our community, and our friends know how we feel. We use the power of the vote to elect leaders who stand for and make the changes needed to move us toward a more perfect system. These rights are enshrined in our Constitution. The League of Women Voter of Alaska believes that one group within a society should never be allowed to determine which of the eligible

citizens can vote easily and which must wait in line for hours or never be allowed to vote at all. The League considers the right to vote and to be informed on the issues facing a nation's people and its government to be essential. The League pledges to continue its work to help support a nation of voting citizens armed with the knowledge they need to make choices that respect the rights of all citizens and to create a system that is based on justice, equality, and equity.

The officers and board members of the League of Women Voters of Alaska
Judy Andree, President

Submitted by Judy Andree; Resident of Juneau, Alaska; 907-321-1559.
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53-year resident of Southeast Alaska.