



Statement on the shooting of Thurman Blevins

Tuesday, June, 26th 2018

Saint Paul MN - The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage offers its condolences to the family of Thurman Blevins. After an altercation with Minneapolis Police Officers responding to reports of shots fired, Blevins life was taken; sparking concerns of police misconduct from the community. As the investigation evolves, the Council aims to work hand in hand with the community and the Governor's office to ensure a transparent and fair investigative process.

While much is unknown about the incident, the legacy of police involved shootings in the African Heritage community is well documented and problematic. Incidents where officers are involved in a shooting call to mind; Philando Castile, Jamar Clark, Terrence Franklin and many others. It is important that our State, and local governments work together with the community to establish a process that moves towards healing from this trauma and that encourages long term trust in local government.

The Council is dedicated to fulfilling our mandate and serving as a liaison between the community and the Governor, whose Commissioner of Public Safety, Commissioner Dohman, leads the primary investigative body concerned here. We are advising the Governor to direct the Commissioner to establish a transparent process with the community and to take the following actions:

- Work with the Minneapolis Police Department to immediately release body camera footage of the incident and/or the 911 calls from neighbors.
- Partner with the Council and community to establish regular meetings in the Camden neighborhood that provide updates and transparency around the process and the investigation. Throughout the investigative process the community needs to know they have a seat at the table.

Moments like this call into question ideas of safety, justice and fairness. Residents want to know that they are safe from violence in their neighborhood. They want to know if the system tasked with providing public safety for everyone, truly is doing so. This tragedy has created an opportunity for our State to prove that we are, in fact, dedicated to public safety and justice for all Minnesotans. The Council will play our role in making this happen.

Thank you,

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The Minnesota Legislature empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage to ensure that people of African heritage fully and effectively participate in and equitably benefit from the political, social, and economic resources, policies and procedures of the State of Minnesota. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

- Advising the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting People of African Heritage;
- Advising the Governor and the Legislature on statutes, rules and revisions to programs to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;
- Serving as a liaison to the federal government, local government units and private organizations on matters relating to People of African Heritage in Minnesota;
- Implementing programs designed to solve problems of People of African Heritage when authorized by statute, rule or order; and
- Publicizing the accomplishments of People of African Heritage and their contributions to the state.