

The Law Office of The Public Defender

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A Message from Theresa G. Haire, the Public Defender of Montgomery County

Dayton, OH, June 5, 2020: A message from Theresa G. Haire, the Public Defender in Montgomery County:

The Office of the Montgomery County Public Defender is profoundly saddened and outraged at the deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. Our hearts go out to their families and to the citizens of Louisville and Minneapolis.

While gut-wrenching and tragic, we are not surprised. Their deaths add to a long list of Black Americans who have been unjustifiably killed at the hands of the police.

I have heard well-meaning people in our community state, with utter confidence, that we are fortunate this type of policing does not happen in Montgomery County. As someone who has represented poor black and brown people for thirty years, I can assure you that heavy-handed and brutal policing most certainly does occur in own community, particularly in neighborhoods that are predominantly poor and black.

If we are to see any meaningful change, the culture of policing in this country, and in our own county, must change. We must stop the practice of unnecessary and aggressive police encounters, arrests, and prosecutions. We must demand that the police be held accountable for their actions. We must dismantle a criminal justice system rooted in structural racism and “tough on crime” policies that cause harm to the citizens of our communities and do little to keep them safe.

The Office of the Montgomery County Public Defender stands in solidarity with George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and all victims of police violence, with our clients, with protesters, and with those who seek to stop the persecution of poor people and people of color. We will continue, each day, to fight for justice and for every citizen of our community to be treated with dignity and compassion. We implore you to join us.

At George Floyd’s memorial, Al Sharpton said that Floyd’s death “changed the world.”

I pray that he is right.

About the Public Defender’s Office: The Law Office of the Public Defender provides legal representation to citizens accused by the government of criminal conduct that can result in a loss of freedom. We defend cases including Felonies, Misdemeanors, Appeals, and Juveniles. We provide these legal services to all persons and base qualification decisions solely on economic status.