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Senate of Pennsylvania

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June 15, 2020

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
Room 225 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Dear Governor,

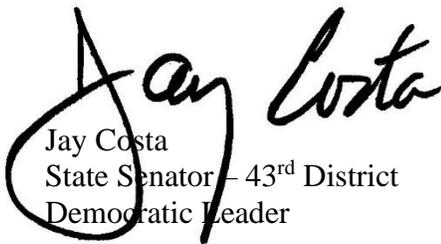
Last week, members of the Pennsylvania Legislative Black Caucus in the House held a peaceful demonstration on the Rostrum of the House, demanding action on legislation addressing the systemic inequity in our law enforcement agencies. Following over an hour of impassioned speeches and a nearly nine-minute moment of silence, representing the amount of time an officer kneeled on the neck of George Floyd, Speaker Turzai approached the Rostrum and lent his support to a Special Session of the legislature to address police reform. We are writing to you as the Senate Democratic Caucus to formally request such a special session.

Senate Democrats have supported all manner of criminal justice and law enforcement reform over the past several legislative sessions –reforms like enhanced police officer screening and training, greater civilian oversight of law enforcement, appointment of independent special prosecutors in officer-involved deaths, and ending civil forfeiture. We are ready and willing to work with our colleagues across the aisle, in both chambers, and yourself to move toward a more just and equitable society. We know that in the past, calls for special sessions have not always resulted in a call to order, so in the absence of a formal directive the Senate Law & Justice and Judiciary Committees will be holding joint hearings this week to hear from experts and witnesses statewide on these issues. While that is a meaningful first step, a special session dedicated to addressing systemic inequality in law enforcement would keep the legislature focused on finding solutions, rather than following the riptide of current events and public opinion. The citizens of Pennsylvania can't wait for the continuation of politics as usual; they demand meaningful reform.

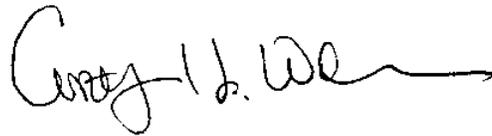
Many of us have marched in the streets while having frank, often painful, discussions on race, equity and systemic oppression behind closed doors. It is beyond time to bring those discussions into the public square and onto the floors of the General Assembly. We urge you to recognize this crisis for what it is: a public health emergency which threatens to damage our society beyond any pandemic. If we fail to act now, to address the systems and institutions in Pennsylvania which perpetuate inequality, then we have no right to claim the mantle of leadership.

Thank you for consideration of this critical matter.

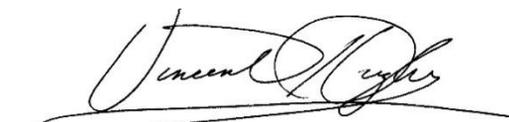
Sincerely,



Jay Costa
State Senator – 43rd District
Democratic Leader



Anthony H. Williams
State Senator – 8th District
Democratic Whip



Vincent Hughes
State Senator – 7th District
Democratic Appropriations Chair



Larry Farnese
State Senator – 1st District
Democratic Caucus Secretary



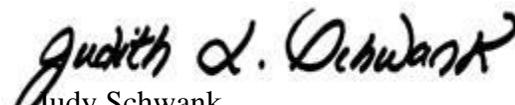
Wayne Fontana
State Senator – 42nd District
Democratic Caucus Chairman



Lisa Boscola
State Senator – 18th District
Democratic Policy Chair



John Blake
State Senator – 22nd District
Democratic Caucus Administrator



Judy Schwank
State Senator – 11th District



Tina Tartaglione
State Senator – 2nd District



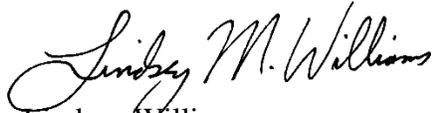
Andrew Dinniman
State Senator – 19th District



Maria Collett
State Senator – 12th District



Art Haywood
State Senator – 4th District



Lindsey Williams
State Senator – 38th District



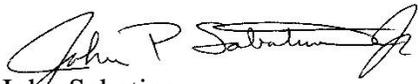
Katie Muth
State Senator – 44th District



Sharif Street
State Senator – 3rd District



Tim Kearney
State Senator – 26th District



John Sabatina
State Senator – 5th District



Pam Iovino
State Senator – 37th District



Steve Santarsiero
State Senator – 10th District



Jim Brewster
State Senator – 45th District