



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement from Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner Hendon on the Death of George Floyd and National Protests

New York City Department of Veterans' Services Commissioner James Hendon released the following remarks on the protests that have arisen across the country in response to the murder of George Floyd.

“Throughout history, African American Service Members fought to ensure our nation’s freedom—even when their own freedom was denied. They did so despite a long list of injustices against Black Americans that hails back to our country’s founding. Slavery, Jim Crow, lynching, redlining, and racial profiling are only a few of the poisons woven into the evolving story of our grand experiment. Even in the face of overwhelming adversity, Black Service Members sacrificed to defend a country that did not accept them. These Veterans fought not for what we were, but for the sake of what we could be—for the higher ideals established in the Declaration of Independence of ‘life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.’ They fought even when they knew that they would not personally see the finish line of equality. They fought to improve life for those who came after them, advancing those ideals, and passing the baton to the next generation.

As a Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army Reserve and a Black Veteran, I stand in awe of those who paved the way for me and those who shine a light on current injustices. Eleven days after the death of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police, as our streets swell with protestors crying out for justice, we look once more to those Veterans as an example of the best of who we are. To honor their service, we must ensure that our country lives up to the ideals that they gave everything of themselves to protect. It is incumbent upon all of us to make the vision that these Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Airmen had about this nation—a vision of our fullest potential, a vision of who we could be, and a vision of a better tomorrow—a reality for all citizens.”

About the New York City Department of Veterans' Services

The mission of the NYC Department of Veterans' Services is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City’s Veteran community in order to foster purpose-driven lives for US Military Service Members—past and present—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families.

We assist NYC Veteran community members on issues that include, but are not limited to: employment, housing, food security, wellbeing, benefits, culture, and targeted advocacy. For more information, please visit www.nyc.gov/vets, call (212) 416-5250, email connect@veterans.nyc.gov, or follow us on social media @nycveterans.