

# ACLU Ohio

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

**<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-ohio-response-statewide-protests-message-systemic-racism>**

## Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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OHIO The ACLU of Ohio has been monitoring the protests happening in cities and towns all across the state and closely reviewing the events that have unfolded in the wake of George Floyd's tragic and preventable death at the hands of police.

**The following statement is attributed to J. Bennett Guess, Executive Director for the ACLU of Ohio:**

The news across the country, specifically in Ohio, has weighed heavy on our hearts this past weekend. The ACLU of Ohio stands with protesters who have risen up to demand justice in the name of George Floyd and countless other Black and Brown people who have been senselessly murdered by police officers across jurisdictions, across states, across decades. We must not lose sight of the undeniable, that there is a very clear through-line that spans all the way back to 1619 when slavery in this nation first began. Each tragic episode since, now exasperated by George Floyd's murder, is a manifestation of a centuries-long disease America's original sin which takes the form of systemic racism, oppression, and violence against communities of color.

The weapons we've observed during this weekend's statewide protests including, but not limited to, tear gas, pepper spray, sound and flash grenades, wooden bullets, street closures, media bans, grossly over-broad curfews, mass arrests, delays in processing time for individuals, and deployment of The National Guard illustrate the over-militarized police presence we have in this state and nation. Metropolitan police departments have an undeniable track-record of using excessive force against people of color, peaceful protesters, individuals experiencing homelessness, individuals in the LGBTQ community, and individuals with a disability.

Until we address the systemic issues of racism, implicit bias, white supremacy, and white privilege in our criminal legal institutions especially police departments we will not have peace. We demand that the long shadow of American slavery be examined in the context of the protests of 2020 and the unrelenting brutality of U.S. police practices.

The ACLU of Ohio continues to push out [know your rights resources](#) that offer guidelines and suggestions on how Ohioans should engage in peaceful protests and exercise their First Amendment rights.

For legal support, the ACLU of Ohio encourages protesters to contact the Ohio National Lawyers Guild at 614-654-6477.

Stay informed

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