



## DFER-DC Releases Statement on Combating Systemic Racism

*Public Education 'Essential Tool for Breaking Down Racist Systems'*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 29, 2020)**—Democrats for Education Reform-DC (DFER-DC) Director Ramin Taheri released the following statement today on the role of public education in combating systemic racism:

“DFER-DC is outraged by the killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis. We stand with those calling for the fullest prosecution of the officers responsible for the murder. And we stand with, and alongside, those exercising their First Amendment right to protest this injustice.

Like so many Black men and women before him, Floyd had his rights and his life violently taken away because of deep-seated, structural, toxic racism—a systemic racism that has too often allowed Black Americans to be treated as if their lives do not matter. And a systemic racism that pervades American public education. But this must change. We are committed to being part of that change.

At DFER-DC, we believe an *equitable, fully funded* public education system is an essential tool to breaking down the racist systems of our society, and we work every day to ensure more Black and Brown children can receive a high-quality public education that allows them to reach their full potential. An important step in that direction is supporting champions for great schools who will look at both short- and long-term solutions to improve all students’ outcomes and opportunities.

As Americans know—especially since November 2016—elections have consequences. It is impossible to overstate the importance of having the right people in the right seats; we need elected officials who are wholly committed to the success of our children. As a political organization, DFER-DC works to elect true advocates for educational equity who will fight for all students, particularly historically marginalized students, who deserve and have a right to a high-quality education.

Although public education in Washington, D.C., has come a long way over the past decade due to the many reforms made by strong leaders, all of DFER-DC’s efforts emanate from the fundamental belief that our public education system, as it exists now, does not adequately serve all students, and we will continue to support candidates who will fight for a more equitable future for every child. In doing so, we regularly highlight issues that voters care about, contrasting the positions of our endorsed candidates and their challengers.

For the past several weeks, DFER-DC has been informing voters in Ward 4 about one candidate’s proposal to divest resources from community policing in the District, a position that is deeply unpopular with Ward 4 residents, especially among African American voters. Recent polling shows that 78% of African American voters and 59% of white voters in Ward 4 do not support cutting police from their neighborhood. Any suggestion that this equates to support for police misconduct or brutality is disingenuous and contradicts everything we stand for and believe.

A man was killed this week because he was Black, an occurrence that is tragically too common in our country. We condemn the murder and call for justice. We fight for the promise of what comes next, starting with the system that touches almost every American—public education. While we know that



education is not the cure all, it's an essential tool for dismantling a centuries-old system of injustice. We look forward to uniting with all allies in this work so that one day in the United States, every child will have access to a great education, regardless of their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or the neighborhood where they live. ”

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