



Statement of Solidarity

Vote Run Lead stands in solidarity with the residents of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and across the United States, who are heartbroken, traumatized and outraged by the persistent killing of Black men and women, by those who have taken an oath to honor and protect the community. We rise to stand with Minneapolis -- a city that Vote Run Lead considers our home -- and to help rebuild. Minneapolis, we see you and we are holding you in our love and our hope.

The events of the past weeks, from Ahmaud Marquez Arbery, to Breonna Taylor, to Christopher Cooper, to Tony McDade, to Regis Korchinski-Paquet, to Yassin Mohamed and now to George Floyd have us grieving and deeply examining what we -- as an organization -- can do to help build a world where each human being is valued. Vote Run Lead is committed to building a democracy that is equitable, inclusive and connected. We train women, especially women from marginalized and disenfranchised backgrounds, to run for public office and to win, because we believe a better democracy is possible.

Yet right now, the path to that possible future is unclear, devastated by current atrocities and further tested by an exclusionist history. We are reminded that a democracy built by and for white men needs more than an overhaul, it needs a radical reimagining -- something we have yet to see, but must audaciously strive towards. How do we do that?

It starts with acknowledging and reckoning with our past, and understanding and owning our everyday actions that perpetuate discriminatory policies. Our assumptions. Our implicit biases. Our silence. We recognize that racism, misogyny, and discrimination were built into every system we operate within. The underlying issues that caused Floyd's death have permeated our country for generations, and they must be tackled head on if we seek true justice.

We also recognize that white supremacy and patriarchy are complex, intertwined and reinforcing systems of oppression. To be honest, many of us have benefited from them even as we oppose their progeny. We acknowledge that whiteness in particular is a privilege -- not one that was asked for, but still one that was built on the backs of working men, women, and children of color in the course of our history. We commit to reorient our work towards dismantling white supremacy and patriarchy and replacing them with shared humanity and the strength of a connected, caring national community.



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And lastly, we stand united with and uplift the women leaders of Minneapolis who have set the model and are using their positional power and personal voice to demand change. We are so proud that many of them have trained with Vote Run Lead and are living representations of our mission:

- Commissioners Angela Conley and Irene Fernando, who sent County Attorney Michael Freeman an official letter pressing him to charge the four officers “[to the fullest extent of the law and to spare no efforts in obtaining guilty verdicts.](#)”;
- Senator Patricia Torres Ray, who made a strong statement recognizing her community’s “[right to peacefully protest](#)”;
- Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, who is using her platform to call for love, justice and healing while demanding the officers are charged for murder and is [raising money for local organizations](#);
- City Council Member Alondra Cano, who on CNN [called for the transfer of the case](#) from Hennepin County to the Minnesota Attorney General and to rebuild with our values;
- City Council Member Andrea Jenkins, who sang [Amazing Grace](#) for George Floyd and his family and is calling for racism to be treated as [a public health emergency](#);
- University of Minnesota President, Joan Gabel, who announced the University would cut ties with the Minnesota Police Department after student body president Jael Karundi demanded “[that the University of Minnesota Police Department ceases any partnerships with the Minneapolis Police Department immediately](#)”;
- Candidate De’Vonna Pittman, who went [live on Facebook](#) to clean the streets and show neighbors working side-by-side to rebuild; and
- Our advisors and trainers, [Lulete Mola](#) and [Nevada Littlewolf](#), who continue to stand in solidarity with the protesters and bear witness to what is really happening on the ground.

We commit the full weight of our organization to embolden and empower more women like them -- intersectional, feminist reformers and anti-racist leaders -- to have their backs, to amplify their leadership, and to put more women like them in positions of power to lead us all into a better future.

In solidarity-- Vote Run Lead