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The League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico grieves the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and the countless other black lives that tragically have been lost. We also speak out against the systems of oppression that continue to deprive all citizens of their Constitutional rights. As an organization whose mission is to empower voters and strengthen democracy, the League stands for equity and justice for all.

We support the peaceful protests by millions of people of all skin colors and all ages around the country and in our community. They are raising their voices in response to the brutal treatment of Mr. Floyd, in spite of the health risks with the pandemic. Speaking out is only the first step. Our work to inform voters and hold government accountable on the local and state level is where real potential for change lies. Changes to systems of criminal justice, education, employment, and health care are long overdue.

Criminal justice should be reviewed from a variety of perspectives, such as selection and ongoing training of officers, decisions by prosecutors and judges, and the operation of prisons. Police officers take an oath to protect and serve the people, nevertheless people are continuing to die, and our nation's unrest must become everyone's concern.

Members of the League have reached out to the local NAACP, as we want to listen and learn from the black community about how we may better stand with you for equity. Our organizations already agree on the importance of voting, and we will work together to encourage all citizens to research candidates running for office in November and to vote for those who share the values that promote justice in our democracy.

Eileen VanWie and Kathy Brook, Co-Presidents
League of Women Voters of Southern New Mexico