

# COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE RICHARDSON RESPONDS TO CONSTITUENT OUTREACH ABOUT EVENTS IN SOUTH PHILADELPHIA

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June 15, 2020



Philadelphia, PA – June 15, 2020 – Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson (At Large) today issued the following statement in response to events in South Philadelphia:

Systematic oppression and racism are woven deep into the fabric of our country as well as the perceptions of many of its citizens. It is not restricted to far-right activists or historical figures, but survives in the mindsets and actions of people from all different backgrounds with a wide variety of responsibility and authority in our City and society. This is why our country continues to see disproportionately high rates of poverty, lack of job opportunities, illness, and police brutality – just to name a few – in Black communities. We will not be able to improve the lives and outcomes of Black people until we do the challenging work to eradicate racism and bias in every facet of our society.

Additionally, the City's posture and reaction to these events is a stark contrast to the reaction to Black Lives Matter protestors. The plain fact that some Americans can practice their First and Second Amendment rights with no fear of retribution in any and all circumstances while others are constantly under threat just existing in this country means we need deep change. This country may have amended the Constitution to correct the blatant disregard of Black lives during its founding, but we have not done the work to change the perceptions and systems that continue to make it possible.

We must ensure that our laws and application of the law are applied consistently and do not disproportionately harm Black people. Respect for First Amendment freedoms must apply to all citizens. We must also uphold the right of freedom of the press. During this weekend's activities and the protests over the last few weeks, members of the press have been threatened, arrested, and attacked. This is completely unacceptable. These men and women have the right to report on these events and when anyone infringes on that right, we must ensure they are held accountable.

I remain committed to making change in our City. This will take hard and painful work for all of us, but I know we can do it. It is the only way forward.