

**DEPARTMENT of
PUBLIC SAFETY**

**PUBLIC
INFORMATION
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Mayor Baraka and Public Safety Director O'Hara Announce Police Investigation of George Floyd Statue Defacing at City Hall

Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka and Public Safety Director Brian A. O'Hara report that police are investigating the defacing of the George Floyd statue at City Hall that occurred overnight.

“The defacing of the statue of George Floyd has been a trend around the country,” said Mayor Baraka. “This horrible act is the very reason that this statue needs to remain and be upheld. As this is not just about George Floyd, it's a deliberate effort to push back against and ultimately dismantle systems of hatred, racism, and white supremacy. We celebrate those efforts in Newark, and will continue to do so, despite the ignorance that has reared its ugly head.”

“The Newark Police Division will not tolerate any bias or hate crime, let alone one perpetrated by a white nationalist group that espouses the overthrow of the constitution and government of the United States,” Director O'Hara said. “The Newark Police Division is vigorously investigating this incident to identify those responsible for this despicable act.”

Just before 6 a.m. today, a Newark police sergeant in the area of City Hall, located at 920 Broad Street, noticed the statue of George Floyd was defaced with graffiti. The face of the statue was also painted black, and in white paint on the torso of the statue were the words: “LIFE...LIBERTY VICTORY PATRIOTFRONT.US”. The Newark Police Division immediately began an investigation, which remains ongoing, and the City's Public Works Department responded to remove the paint.

The 700-pound bronze statue was unveiled in front of Newark City Hall on June 16, 2021. It was commissioned by actor, director and filmmaker Leon Pickney. The statue was sculpted by artist Stanley Watts and donated to the City of Newark with a plan to stand in front of City Hall for at least one year in collaboration with the Division of Arts and Cultural Affairs. The artwork honors the life of George Floyd, an African-American man who was brutally murdered by a white Minneapolis police officer.

While Newark Police are actively searching for the suspects in this incident, we seek the public's help in quickly identifying them as part of this investigation.

“We are aware of a similar incident in Brooklyn, and are in communication with our federal, state, and county law enforcement partners, as well as the New York City police. It's disgusting that what was meant to be a symbol of the dignity of all human life would be disfigured by those who espouse hate,” Director O'Hara added. “I stand in solidarity with Mayor Baraka as we pledge to ensure that the criminals who committed this crime are brought to justice. Hate has no place in our community.”

Director O'Hara urges anyone with information about this incident to call the Department's 24-hour Crime Stopper tip line at 1-877-NWK-TIPS (1-877-695-8477). All anonymous Crime Stopper tips are kept confidential and could result in a reward.

Anonymous tips may also be made using the Police Division's website at: www.newarkpd.org or through our Smartphone App available at iTunes or on Google Play. Search Newark Police Division to download the App.