Comments on Protests for Justice Following Murder of George Floyd

AFT Connecticut President Jan Hochadel today made the following public remarks in response to demonstrations across the state and country demanding accountability for last week's police killing in Minneapolis:

“Our members are still grieving the public execution the whole country witnessed last Tuesday in Minnesota. Many have taken to the streets in cities and towns across Connecticut over the past several days, joining arms with civil rights advocates to demand change.

“In this historic moment, I couldn’t be prouder of their commitment to peacefully protest injustice and take collective action.

“Teachers, paraprofessionals and school-related personnel have had the added responsibility of helping children and young adults process the incident and the demonstrations. Despite the limitations of distance learning, they have provided guidance, support and comfort for their students’ virtual ‘living history’ lesson.

“Their efforts are a reminder of the vital role educators play in cultivating future generations’ civic engagement.

“For criminal justice professionals, video of yet another police killing of an unarmed black man has been particularly painful. They understand that each and every one of these tragic incidents erodes the public trust needed to protect all our communities.

“Their critically important work reinforces why ‘a few bad apples’ among officers responsible for keeping the peace cannot be tolerated.

“Finally, the events of the past week have generated additional stress and anxiety for nurses and health professionals. Many have taken on this additional burden while saving the lives of patients — and even some of their colleagues — battling COVID-19.

“Their commitment to protecting the community’s physical health inspires hope at a time of great mental anguish.

“Let the examples set by so many of our union members help define this moment. From marching with ‘Black Lives Matter’ activists to lifting up black and brown youth, they are helping light the way toward a better future.”

# # #

AFT Connecticut represents approximately 30,000 hard-working women and men in PreK-12 education, healthcare, public service and higher education from more than 90 local unions throughout the state. For more information, visit www.aftct.org or follow the labor federation on Twitter at @AFTCT and on Facebook at AFT Connecticut.