

## **Ohio Education Association Stands in Solidarity with Protestors Demanding an End to Systemic Racism and Brutality in wake of George Floyd's Death**

COLUMBUS – June 1, 2020 – As Americans exercise their fundamental right to free speech by taking part in protests across the nation, the Ohio Education Association (OEA) joins them in urging long overdue reforms to address the unacceptable racial disparities in the United States. “George Floyd’s death at the hands of a Minneapolis police officer was horrific, and not merely an example of some ‘bad apple’ who should be prosecuted for murder, but symptomatic of a system that perpetuates brutality against people of color,” said OEA President Scott DiMauro. “We all share a responsibility to break the cycle of violence and systemic racism.”

OEA supports its members and their students who are expressing themselves through peaceful protests and adding their voices to the important national conversation about race and inequality sparked by Floyd’s death. “We have a unique responsibility as educators to fight against injustice,” DiMauro said. “Public schools are the place where we can learn to discuss issues without the fear of violence. The education system can help bring people together.”

The closing of schools that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed inequities in American society that are also symptomatic of the country’s racial disparities. “Only by addressing these deep-seated issues head-on can we ensure that all students are positioned for success, regardless of where they live or what they look like,” DiMauro said.

OEA calls on police forces to exercise restraint in their response to protestors who are working to bring about needed changes. “We need trauma-informed care, not suppression of mostly young activists,” DiMauro said. “We are saddened by how divided our communities are right now and by the destruction we’ve seen, but more than anything, we are saddened and outraged by what has caused this situation - a system that has disadvantaged and disenfranchised people of color in our country.”

“To those who have chosen to exploit this situation to sow destruction and provoke divisiveness in communities that are hurting, we say ‘shame on you’. To those who are non-violently protesting injustices and fighting to shape necessary reforms, OEA stands with you in solidarity,” DiMauro said.

### **About OEA**

OEA represents 122,000 teachers, faculty members and support professionals who work in Ohio’s schools, colleges, and universities to help improve public education and the lives of Ohio’s children. OEA members provide professional services to benefit students, schools and the public in virtually every position needed to run Ohio’s schools.