

Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers: Statement on police shooting of Jacob Blake

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On Sunday, August 23 a law enforcement officer in Kenosha Wisconsin shot Jacob Blake, a Black man. Video of the incident was circulated on social media and unrest followed in Kenosha, Madison, and elsewhere. This tragedy is another horribly sad example, adding to the long list of American tragedies, involving use of force by law enforcement.

Law enforcement now asks the public not to jump to conclusions based on what they observed in the video, but instead wait until law enforcement releases their full investigation –a request they neglect to make when regular citizens are alleged to have committed crimes.

There should not be different standards for members of the public and law enforcement. Instead, the justice system should treat everyone equally- regardless of race, gender, class, religion, sexual preference, ability or employment. Unequal standards and the lack of transparency within the law enforcement community to properly address the root causes which have led to these repeated tragedies are but some of the reasons people throughout our country are demanding that law enforcement- and the entire criminal justice system- not only strive towards but to actually be, fair. WACDL joins the chorus of people demanding that law enforcement, those who took an oath to protect all of us, live up to America's claimed principle of treating everyone equal under the law.

As we did in June, WACDL again calls for greater transparency, better data and creation of use of force standards so that our system is fair for everyone. As a simple step toward greater transparency, WACDL calls for police body cameras to

be mandatory. It is clear that police body cameras are as important to public safety as any other law enforcement equipment. They protect both the public and law enforcement. There is simply no excuse for failing to provide this critically important equipment on every community.