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Dear Sisters, Brothers, and Comrades,

The death of George Floyd in America was the result of inhumane police brutality that is perpetuated by the institutional culture of white supremacy. Regis Korchinski-Paquet, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and Tony McDad have all died at the hands of, or during, interactions with police. These are only recent examples.

Many of us who are hearing about these incidents are considering—for the first time—how anti-Black racist practices can kill. The history of police violence against Black communities is a never-ending tragedy. We must all speak up about the injustice. We cannot stay silent. Silence is the tool of the oppressor.

This moment calls for us to seriously consider what policy changes are necessary to accomplish our goal of divesting from anti-Black institutions, and reinvesting in crucial social services. COPE SEPB supports the demands for justice for Black people that have their rights violated by police and those in authority every day. Furthermore, COPE SEPB is disappointed that it requires rallies, protests, and campaigns to seek justice by demanding that Black Lives Matter.

More work is required in the labour movement to ensure that our Black comrades not only feel safe and heard but are also treated equitably and fairly. COPE SEPB is committed to supporting Black activism with demonstrations, finances and empowering our members to help in any way we can.

We will continue to work with all levels of leadership in COPE SEPB to ensure that Black voices are heard. We acknowledge that by no means are we outside of white supremacy nor that our white leadership is not privileged by it. Together we are stronger, which is why we will continue to examine the ways we can institute anti-racist, equitable practices and systems within our National union.

We are asking you as an individual to find ways to support and amplify Black voices and activism happening at all levels. You can do this by standing in solidarity with Black communities in the streets, signing a petition, donating to organizations working to make policy changes happen, being supportive of Black colleagues in your workplace facing oppression, amplifying Black voices using your social media accounts or educating yourself on how you can challenge your own preconceptions of white supremacy and privilege and work to dismantle it.

If you are experiencing anti-Black racism in your workplace, please contact your Regional Vice-President.

In solidarity,

COPE SEPB National Executive Board