



Indianapolis Metropolitan Chapter #0133

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MAYOR’S LETTER FALLS SHORT OF BLACK VETERAN’S DEMANDS

Indianapolis, IN – Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, true to what his office had stated, delivered in a letter Wednesday his response to a letter delivered to him June 30 by the local chapter of the National Association for Black Veterans (NABVETS). Just the day before the NABVETS Indianapolis Metropolitan Chapter (IMC) #0133 had sent the mayor a letter expressing their “deep concern” over the unnecessary brutality and killing of Americans of African-descent by the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD), requesting a meeting to discuss those concerns, seeking resolution to the underlying problem of system racism within the ranks of IMPD.

In his letter addressed to NABVETS IMC #133 Commander Curtis Godfrey, Mayor Hogsett cordially thanked him for his group’s “commitment to our community,” and expressed appreciation for their “continued engagement and work with my Administration.” The mayor’s letter pointed out that he had facilitated a meeting between Commander Godfrey and the President of the Civilian Police Merit Board President, retired Indiana Supreme Court Justice Frank Sullivan, with an eye toward including NABVETS IMC 133 in the board’s review of disciplinary matrix. The board will also look at a use of force and firearm policies, according to the mayor’s letter. NABVETS had made their participation in the hiring, disciplining, and firing of IMPD officers one of their demands. While Commander Godfrey expressed encouragement at this development, he says, “This is a good start, but there is a lot more work that needs to be done, and it leaves a lot of our demands unmet.”

Godfrey said, “We’re thankful for the mayor’s response and willingness to stay engaged with NABVETS as we seek solutions to rooting out systemic racism within IMPD, in particular, and Marion County, in general.” He went on to say, “However, the mayor’s letter fell short of addressing several of our concerns and demands,” presented to Hogsett in their June 30 letter. “We will be formally responding to the mayor’s letter,” Godfrey continued, “but in the meantime, we will continue pursuing an agenda that will ultimately result in the protection of our people from police brutality and unjustified killings based on our race.”

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Godfrey said his organization is open to a continued dialogue with Mayor Hogsett and others in his administration, but also made it clear that individual members have advocated for the formation of an independent political party to allow Americans of African-descent an alternative to candidates offered by the mostly two-party system. He said, “In addition, we will initiate self-defense training, so our people don’t feel helpless in their own communities but are legally-armed and properly trained.”

Godfrey said the mayor’s letter and next steps will be among the topics for their planned recruitment rally Sunday, July 19, at 4 p.m., inside Hovey Street Church of Christ, 2338 Hovey St., Indianapolis, IN.

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