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## **Central Texas Interfaith Williamson County Statement on Police Involved Killings, Protests, and Police Response**

As member institutions of Central Texas Interfaith in Williamson County,\* we believe that the homicide of Javier Ambler in Williamson County on March 29, 2019, along with the deaths of George Floyd in Minneapolis and Mike Ramos in Austin, exposes, again, the twin evils of racism and violence and their effects on those systematically marginalized and denied human dignity in our country.

Mr. Ambler’s senseless death is but one more example of institutional racism and the violence wrought upon the selves, souls, and bodies of our black siblings. We believe that all human beings are made in our Creator’s image of love and should be able to live a life free from undue harm, and have a safe community in which all are given the chance to grow, thrive, and flourish.

To this end, we call upon our elected officials across Williamson County to create constructive dialogue and build relationships which can help prevent the escalation of routine encounters between law enforcement and citizens into violent confrontations. We further call on you to act with great urgency, for the time is NOW. We will not tolerate another person of color being unjustly killed by those who are commissioned to protect and serve.

We will engage with members of the County Court, City Councils in municipalities across the county, and allied organizations to explore concrete ways to be actively non-racist and address the long-term effects of systematic racism in our community. This includes creating policy that provides transparent accountability and oversight, with public participation, of law enforcement agencies throughout the county.

Our community institutions -- including government, educational, judicial, law enforcement, and religious institutions -- share the deep history of systemic racism towards people of color. While Central Texas Interfaith will listen to all sides, in the end we believe black lives matter, and we will stand with the most marginalized who are boldly leading this moment.

*\*Central Texas Interfaith is a non-partisan, multi-ethnic, multi- issue coalition of 50 religious congregations, schools, unions, and civil organizations who work together to address public issues that affect the well being of families and neighborhoods in our community. <https://www.austininterfaith.org>*