



# Pennsylvania Black Conference On Higher Education, Inc.

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## **Statement from PBCOHE President Rachael Banks on the Killing of Tyre Nichols**

Yesterday, I watched the video of Tyre Nichols' traffic stop, chase, and beating that was released by the Memphis Police Department. I recoiled as he was thrown to the ground by police officers, who towered over him giving conflicting commands, and sprayed pepper spray in his face and deployed tasers. My heart broke as he said, "I'm just trying to go home," as I imagined the fear spreading through his body when he realized that he might not make it. I hoped, when he ran, that he'd make it to his mother's home close by, where he might be protected from people who should have been protecting him. I cried as I watched the pole camera footage of the five officers beating and kicking him as he yelled for his mother, even as he laid on the ground trying to protect his ribs and his face, long after he ceased to be a threat to any of them. I watched the officers prop him up against a police car as they recounted the events of minutes before, without any regard for his health, safety, or rights.

I struggled with the camaraderie between the officers in these moments, juxtaposed with the violence they inflicted on Tyre Nichols only moments before. I saw him propped on the ground, leaning against a police car, and counted the minutes that ticked by on the video without a single call for medical assistance. I wondered why he was beaten and kicked for four minutes without being handcuffed, and I questioned how any person could successfully follow the 71, often conflicting, commands he was given in the 13-minutes between the initial traffic stop and the end of the violence he suffered at the hands of police officers. Tyre Nichols was 29 years old. He was a father to a four-year old son, he was employed by FedEx, and he was an aspiring photographer. Above all else, he was not supposed to die like this. He had so much life left to live.

We have seen far too many Black men die at the hands of police officers in this country. Communities and citizens, particularly those of color, must be able to trust police – not fear them. PBCOHE stands with others calling for accountability and transparency, and an end to police misconduct and the use of excessive force. Our hearts, thoughts, and prayers go out to Tyre Nichols' family, as well as to communities in Memphis and across the country who are grieving this loss.