                               Statement of the Virginia Association of Commonwealth’s Attorneys

                                                                  on the Killing of George Floyd

We, the elected Commonwealth’s Attorneys of the counties, cities, and towns of Virginia, stand united in condemning the brutal, senseless, and inexcusable killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis last week.  Mr. Floyd’s death at the hands of a police officer, who was sworn to protect and serve all citizens, strikes at the heart of our mission, as prosecutors, to treat all people as equal and to see that justice is served. We do not condone the tactics employed by those four officers and reject the use of unnecessary force by law enforcement against any member of our communities.

Our primary duty as prosecutors is to keep our fellow citizens safe from harm and to punish, through the law, those who harm them.  We share that duty with the hard-working, self-sacrificing law-enforcement officers who risk their lives to protect our communities and who carry the burden of making amends for the abuses of the worst among them.

To our fellow citizens who have peacefully protested, we share your grief and anger.  We recognize that the killing of George Floyd is but the latest killing of a black person while under police control.  We commit ourselves to have honest conversations with our law-enforcement agencies and our communities to ensure not just that we are policing but that we are policing in the right way, without bigotry or racism.

We must redouble our efforts to apply the law fairly to all people, to root out implicit and explicit bias in our ranks, and to use our positions as community leaders to rebuild trust and also build trust that has never existed before.

Carved in marble above the doors to the Supreme Court, the temple of American justice, are the words, “Equal Justice under Law.”  In honor of the memory of George Floyd, we rededicate ourselves to the pursuit of that sacred ideal.