



NEWS RELEASE

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California legislators stand together to seek justice for Trayvon Martin

Black, Latin and Asian caucus members don 'hoodies' in solidarity with slain teen's family

SACRAMENTO – Outraged by inflammatory public statements and the failure of law enforcement to take action, members of the California Legislative Black Caucus (CLBC), Latino Legislative Caucus (LLC) and Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (APILC) donned their 'hoodies' as they adjourned Thursday's Legislative Session in memory of Trayvon Martin. The three caucuses and other concerned Members then joined together for a news conference calling for justice for the murdered Florida teen.

On February 26, 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot down by a self-styled "neighborhood watch leader" as he walked to his father's home carrying a bag of Skittles and a bottle of iced tea. More than a month later, no charges have been filed against his killer, and some are blaming the young man's choice of clothing for his death.

"Just as we recognize Denim Day each year to signify that you can't blame a woman for her own rape for wearing jeans, you can't blame this young man for his own death because he chose to wear what nearly every teen in America has in his or her closet," said Senator Roderick D. Wright (D-Inglewood), who called for the three caucuses to band together. "Trayvon Martin was killed because George Zimmerman assumed a black teen walking in his neighborhood must be up to no good and took it upon himself to serve as judge, jury and executioner."

"The tragedy of a young man's untimely and unfair death is being compounded each day by the hateful and hurtful comments of those seeking to deflect blame from the neighborhood vigilante who killed him, and by the failure of law enforcement officials to seek justice for his murder," said CLBC chairman Senator Curren D. Price, Jr., adding, "There is no argument to be made that Trayvon Martin was the aggressor here. The recorded evidence clearly shows that Mr. Zimmerman pursued Trayvon Martin -- as Trayvon walked unsuspecting to his father's home to enjoy his Skittles and iced tea -- against the explicit instructions of law enforcement."

"The unfortunate tragedy of Trayvon Martin's death has inspired a national movement across all communities to fight against racial profiling and racism," said Assemblymember Warren T. Furutani (D – South Los Angeles County), Chair of the APILC. "The authorities need to listen to the voices of communities across our nation demanding justice and measures to prevent such a senseless tragedy from ever happening again."

"It is a shame that a young man in America cannot walk down the street without fear of being picked on or in this case, murdered because of the color of his skin," said LLC Chair Assemblymember Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens). "The senseless murder of Trayvon Martin is exasperated by a law that allows people to use the self-defense claim to kill in cold blood and walk away with no consequences. A solid revision of this law is needed so that the spirit of the law fits the letter of the law. I hope Trayvon's death serves as a call for all of us to seek tolerance and understanding before we jump to conclusions and can't retract our actions."

PHOTO 1: Senators Ted Lieu, Leland Yee and Curren D. Price look on as Senator Roderick D. Wright begins the news conference. Assembly members later joined them during a break from Session.

PHOTO 2: Senator Ted Lieu, Assemblymember Isadore Hall, III, Sen. Leland Yee, Sen. Roderick D. Wright, Assm. Steven Bradford and Assembly Speaker John Perez listen intently as Assm. Holly Mitchell addresses reporters.

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