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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Texas Southern University Announces National Conference on Police Misconduct & Qualified Immunity: Reimagining “We the People”

(Friday, January 15, 2021) – The killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, sparked nationwide protests and rekindled the national debate concerning the use and misuse of physical violence by law enforcement officers in Black communities. It also reinforced the need for greater police accountability. The public also raised concerns about the manner in which officers responded to these public protests, primarily led by black protestors. Most recently on January 6, 2021, insurrectionists violently protested and Americans looked on while majority white protestors committed blatant acts of violence against law enforcement and were allowed to gain access to our nation’s Capitol in their attempt to interrupt the Electoral College vote count during a joint session of Congress. The public has raised concerns that these insurrectionists were met with unreasonably low levels of resistance by law enforcement when compared to the violent behavior and prejudicial attitudes displayed by some law enforcement officers who responded to protestors in the wake of George Floyd’s death and the killing of other unarmed Black people. In observance of Black History Month, Thurgood Marshall School of Law (“Thurgood Law”) will examine the long-lasting effect of police violence on families, remedies for people injured by police violence and how protestors should be treated given First Amendment Protections, including a review of the inequitable treatment of black protestors throughout U.S. history.

Please join us on **Thursday, February 4, 2021, from 9:00am-5:00pm**, as Texas Southern University’s Thurgood Law, in partnership with The Earl Carl Institute for Legal & Social Policy, Inc., the Thurgood Marshall Law Review and the TSU Center for Justice Research co-present a virtual national conference, sponsored by the American Association for Justice Robert L. Habush Endowment, entitled, ***Police Misconduct & Qualified Immunity: Reimagining “We the People.”*** This conference provides a timely, relevant, and much-needed discussion on the disproportionate use of force by police in interactions with black people and the disparate treatment of black protestors in the United States.

Per Thurgood Law Dean and Professor Joan R.M. Bullock, “The permissive and at times, supportive, response of Capitol police to the breach of the nation’s Capitol on January 6, 2021 by a violent, predominantly white mob has been broadcast by the news media and on social media for all to see. Media and others have begun to comment on what Black America has long pointed out and continues to fight against: that skin color is a primary determinant of how police generally respond to persons on matters of law and order. The event of January 6 and the unfolding repercussions to those involved in the Capitol riot that day, provide context in sharp visual focus, for what will be a spirited discussion by panel members on the disparate treatment of blacks in the United States.”

The conference keynote speaker will be Attorney Sherrilyn Ifill, law professor, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. The day-long virtual conference will include special presentations, a virtual exhibition hall and a dynamic lineup of panel discussions exploring:

- ***The Criminal Justice System: “George Floyd Bill” & Qualified Immunity:*** The state of police accountability given qualified immunity, police unions and protections in policing contracts
- ***The Anatomy of §1983 Litigation:*** Best practices in successful civil rights litigation
- ***The Future of First Amendment Protests Protections: Examining the Use of Brutality on Those Fighting Against Violence:*** The future of First Amendment protection considering the disparate treatment given black protestors
- ***The U.S. Constitution: Reimagining “We the People” as an Inclusive Construct:*** The inclusiveness of the evolving constructs of the “We” in the Constitution’s “We the People”

To complement the symposium, *The Bridge: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Legal & Social Policy*, will publish a special issue journal with articles on topics related to the issues raised in this conference. For information about submitting an article to the journal, contact Lucinda Daniels at Lucinda.daniels@tmslaw.tsu.edu. **Register for this virtual conference at <http://eci.pub/ReimaginingWethePeople>.**