



NORTH STELTON A.M.E. CHURCH

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Rev. Dr. Eric R. Billips, Sr. & Rev. Dr. Myra Turner Billips, Pastors

February 22, 2022

Thomas J. Chirichella, Jr., Acting Prosecutor
Office of the Somerset County Prosecutor
40 North Bridge Street
P.O. Box 3000
Somerville, NJ 08876

Dear Mr. Chirichella,

On behalf of the pastors, officers, and members of the North Stelton African Methodist Episcopal Church in Piscataway, New Jersey, we wish to express our displeasure and disappointment with regard to the Bridgewater Police Department's treatment of a young Black teenager during an altercation that took place recently at the Bridgewater Mall between two teens, one Black and one White. The video of the altercation clearly shows that while the officers quickly apprehended the Black teen, with their knees in his back, the White teen was allowed to sit on one of the nearby couches. Once the officers had handcuffed the Black teen, one of the officers approached the White teen who, as visibly apparent in the video and as he indicated in a televised news interview, expected to be handcuffed as well. It never happened.

Incidents such as these are clear indications that the mistreatment and injustice perpetrated against certain populations within the United States remain a valid concern. They seem to indicate a bifurcated justice system that has consistently engaged persons of color with a greater degree of severity and aggression than that which is typically applied to Whites. We deem such actions as unjust, inequitable, and a violation of the civil rights of such persons of color according to the Constitution of the United States of America.

Please know that we stand in solidarity with the New Jersey chapter of the NAACP and the Somerset County Democratic Committee Black Caucus in asking that the officers associated with the incident be suspended immediately. Such action will be a clear indication that the City of Bridgewater is serious about racial equality, true justice, and the well-being of all of its citizens.

In the name of Righteousness, Truth and Justice,

I support the contents of this letter,

Rev. Dr. Eric R. Billips, Sr., Pastor
Rev. Dr. Myra T. Billips, Pastor
North Stelton African Methodist Episcopal Church