



ARLINGTON BRANCH #7047

NAACP

P.O. Box 4528, Arlington, VA 22204

E-mail: 7047@arlingtonnaacp.com

Phone: 1-877-501-6417

<https://www.arlingtonnaacp.com>

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February 1, 2022

11:00 pm.

PRESS RELEASE

NAACP Arlington Branch Public Statement: Man Dies After Being Found Unresponsive in Detention Facility

The news of yet another inmate of color dying in the Arlington County Detention Center is met by the NAACP Arlington Branch with great sorrow and revulsion. Mr. Thompson, like Mr. Spencer last year, was "found" unresponsive and died while in Sheriff Arthur's custody on February 1, 2022. He is now the seventh person of color to die in custody in Arlington in as many years. Unfortunately, the Sheriff for Arlington County still has not disclosed the failures that led to the last two Black men who died after being "found" unresponsive, nor has she disclosed reforms, if any, made to guarantee the health, welfare, and safety of those she and her command team are charged with protecting.

Nevertheless, even if anything was changed, Black men are still dying in custody, so any changes are inadequate. While few details are known right now, we know this is the **THIRD** death in two years and the **SEVENTH** death in seven years. We have only cryptic information that inmates are "found" unresponsive. But we do know that neither medical conditions nor withdrawal should not be death sentences while individuals are incarcerated by Arlington County Police Department for minor crimes.

We also know that ACPD should not be investigating given the poor and incomplete track record of their investigation into Mr. Becton's death (2020) and co investigation into Mr. Spencer's death (2021) and given their close ties with the ACDF.

Moreover, Mr. Thompson was awaiting a hearing on a trespassing charge when he died in a jail cell in which he had been confined for over two weeks. Mr. Spencer died for the crime of being homeless and Black. Mr. Becton for a probation violation that should not have landed him in jail. The other men who died in custody we're held on similar minor charges.

The pattern was evident then, and it continues to repeat, without anything more from the County than “expression of condolences.” Condolences ring hollow. The NAACP’s national motto, **We Are Done Dying**, sadly applies but will our elected officials and the government listen this time?

We call on the U.S. Department of Justice to open investigations immediately into the now seven deaths of people of color in the Arlington County Detention Facility and for an investigation into the arrest and incarceration patterns in Arlington County as well.

On behalf of the Executive Committee,



Julius D. "J.D." Spain, Sr.

President

Mobile Phone: 1-800-393-0438

E-mail: 7047@arlingtonnaacp.com

Founded in 1909 in response to the ongoing violence against Black people around the country, the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) is the largest and most pre-eminent civil rights organization in the nation. We have over 2,200 units and branches across the country, along with well over 2M activists. Our mission is to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure all persons' health and well-being. Units of the NAACP are designated as 501(c)(4) organizations, and only the National Office is a 501(c)(3) organization. A 501(c)(4) organization is a nonprofit corporation operated exclusively to promote social justice.