



NAACP



NAACP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Arlington Branch NAACP and Fairfax County Branch NAACP Joint Public Statement
Surrounding Racist Actions at Fairfax County and Arlington Public Schools**

Northern, Virginia – The Fairfax and Arlington branches of the NAACP join to express both horror and sadness regarding the bigoted acts on display at a high school football game between Fairfax County and Arlington County schools. On March 5, 2021, Marshall High School players spat at, taunted, and used racist slurs, including "boy" and the N-word toward Wakefield High School players. As disturbing as this is, we are further alarmed by VHSL referees' disregard on the field for the racist aggression hurled at children. For 2 ½ hours, Wakefield players endured the insults and epithets, despite having told coaches and referees what was happening to them. We condemn these actions, but our condemnation is insufficient. Generations of students and athletes have suffered the same grotesque racism on the field. The condemnation that results in no change is worse than silence because it shows that our feelings, words, and outrage are of no importance. If our children suffer the same taunts on the field that we did, and that our parents did, in school and on the playing fields, then our condemnation is not enough. The danger is too great for us to make statements that continue to fall on deaf ears.

We demand that VHSL adopt a zero-tolerance policy regarding racist behavior that draws a clear red line indicating when a behavior has gone too far and enforces harsh enough penalties to stop this chronic torment. We demand that referees and coaches take swift action within the policy's boundaries and insist that professionals who fail to protect children from racial harm and trauma are disciplined and terminated.

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