



NAACP Arlington Branch
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arlington, Virginia - NAACP Arlington Branch has learned that the family of Paul [Thompson](#), who passed away while in custody at the Arlington County Detention Facility on February 1, 2022, has filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against some organizations and people responsible for Mr. Thompson's healthcare, including the jail's medical provider, Mediko, and individuals employed to provide care at the jail. Since Mediko took over as the jail's medical provider fewer than three years ago, three people have died at the jail. Mr. Thompson's family states that he was not given proper care despite being visibly incapacitated, lethargic, and spending virtually 24 hours a day in a wheelchair. **"We need to reform the Arlington criminal legal system to ensure people like Paul Thompson are not arrested and held in jail for an alleged poverty crime," said NAACP Arlington Branch President Michael Hemminger**

This lawsuit shines a light on Arlington County's ongoing, unaddressed failure to prevent deaths at the jail. The facts alleged by Mr. Thompson's family paint a picture of a system that allegedly neglects the most vulnerable and puts them at risk of dying. According to a report by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC), which conducted a review of the jail's medical and behavioral health services, a mortality review investigation should be conducted after each death that identifies factors that contributed to the death. We do not know whether such an investigation was conducted for Mr. Thompson, much less what any investigation may have revealed about contributing factors. The NIC report also recommended that the jail refuse to take residents who are medically or psychiatrically unstable. Yet Arlington County continues to arrest and hold people experiencing homelessness and other crises, forcing them into a jail that allegedly cannot assure their medical needs are met and keep them safe.

"After a new medical provider, three additional deaths, and no results from investigations of prior deaths, it is apparent our county is doing nowhere near enough to stop people from dying in the jail," said NAACP Arlington Branch President Michael Hemminger.

Earlier this year, the NAACP General [Counsel](#) and the Arlington [Human Rights Commission](#) (HRC) called for the U.S. Department of Justice to perform an independent investigation of the Arlington County Detention Facility. Shortly after the HRC's request, Arlington County removed the HRC commissioners and curbed its authority.

NAACP Arlington Branch renews our [call](#) for an independent investigation that identifies areas that appear to be a [factor in these deaths](#). We are again calling for the records of any investigations to be released to the public. Additionally, we reiterate our [call](#) for an end to arresting and holding people in jail for poverty crimes.

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NAACP Arlington Branch advocates, agitates, and litigates for the civil rights due to Black America. Our legacy is built on the foundation of grassroots activism by civil rights pioneers who founded the NAACP in 1909 and this branch in 1940. The work of this nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization is sustained by 21st-century Arlington activists and supporters. From classrooms and courtrooms to Arlington County government, the Virginia General Assembly, and the U.S. Congress, our members work to secure the social and political power that will end race-based discrimination. That work is rooted in racial equity, civic engagement, and supportive policies and institutions for all marginalized people. We are committed to an Arlington without racism where Black people enjoy equitable opportunities in a thriving community.