



Disability
Rights
Oregon

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Statement on the killing of Daniel Prude in Rochester, New York

Portland, Oregon—Disability Rights Oregon released the following statement in response to the killing of Daniel Prude in Rochester, New York.

Statement from Disability Rights Oregon:

One cold night in March, a 41-year old Rochester man named Daniel Prude was having a psychotic episode and ran into the street without any clothes on. Earlier that day, he had been hospitalized for suicidal thoughts, but was released.

Grasping that Daniel was experiencing a mental health crisis, his brother Joe called 9-1-1 for help. Several police officers responded. They handcuffed Daniel's hands behind his back, even though he was not armed, and placed a mesh hood over his head. The officers pushed him face down into the pavement and held his face there for somewhere between two to three minutes.

The paramedics arrived 11 minutes after the police to find Daniel unconscious. He was declared brain dead when he arrived at the hospital and died a week later. The medical examiner determined that his death was a homicide.

Daniel was a Black American.

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Disability Rights Oregon is the Protection and Advocacy System for Oregon

We mourn this heartbreaking loss of life. No person should be suffocated and killed while in police custody. Daniel's family was looking for help for a loved one who was not well. Instead he ended up killed by the people they called for help. Daniel's life had value. He deserved to be treated with compassion and to receive the care he needed.

The convergence of Blackness and disability puts an individual at enormous risk of becoming a victim of police violence. We've seen similar tragic circumstances unfold across the country and here in Portland. In January 2019, Andre Gladen, a 36-year-old Black man who experienced blindness and mental illness, was killed by police.

We stand in solidarity with our family, friends, clients, and colleagues of color as we work to end police killings of Black Americans and institutional racism in all its forms. Undoing slavery's legacy that perpetuates brutality and lethal violence against Black Americans is an obligation we all share.

We express our deepest sympathies to Daniel's grieving family.

We stand with our sister Protection and Advocacy agency, Disability Rights New York, and share their view that the circumstances of Daniel's death are further evidence of "a system driven by presumptions that Black men with mental illness are inherently violent." We must do more to undo these pernicious misconceptions. Like Disability Rights New York, we are resolutely committed to addressing those systemic failures that result in law enforcement killing Black people with impunity.

We will continue our work to strengthen police accountability and ensure alternatives to police response are available for people in crisis.

About Disability Rights Oregon

Disability Rights Oregon upholds the civil rights of people with disabilities to live, work, and engage in the community. The nonprofit works to transform systems, policies, and practices to give more people the opportunity to reach their full potential. For more than 40 years, the organization has served as Oregon's Protection & Advocacy system.

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