

EBONY

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EBONY LED COALITION CELEBRATES EARLY RELEASE FOR FORMER DETROIT MAYOR KWAME KILPATRICK

Atlanta, GA (May 22, 2020) – Kwame Kilpatrick, former Detroit Mayor, has been granted home confinement after spending 7 years of a 28-year sentence. Kilpatrick, convicted in 2013 of perjury, obstruction of justice, and other crimes, was not expected to be paroled until 2037. He is on mandatory quarantine and then will be on home confinement until June 10 when EBONY will host a press conference as Kilpatrick is eager to speak.

In March, EBONY in coordination with the National Baptist Convention of America, the NAACP, National Business League, and a coalition of over 30 Black Megachurches called for Kilpatrick's early release. Following Michigan state Rep. Sherry Gay-Dagnogo who in February led the charge by delivering a letter to President Donald Trump from Detroit leaders seeking clemency for Kilpatrick. Millionaire businessman Peter Karmanos lobbied for a Kilpatrick pardon from Trump, while current Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan also expressed support. Ja'Ron Smith, Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of the Office of American Innovation tweeted his appreciation of Kilpatrick's release to POTUS and AG Barr.

The coalition's plea referenced the President's recent pardons and commutations and the extremity of Kilpatrick's sentence. It was reported last month that a fellow inmate of Kilpatrick's died on April 25 after testing positive for the coronavirus. Patrick Jones, 49, was serving a 27-year sentence for a drug-related crime when he became ill at the federal prison in Oakdale, Louisiana.

"Kilpatrick was sentenced to 28 years in federal prison for his crimes. And while there has been a lot of debate about his guilt or innocence, we were arguing neither, rather, we were opposing the excessive nature and length of his sentence. Kwame Kilpatrick's punishment of a 28-year sentence did not fit the crime," says Rev. Keyon S. Payton, National Director, Community Outreach and Engagement for EBONY, "as EBONY celebrates its 75th year we take pride in continuing to use our platform to raise awareness to issues of social justice and civil rights."

Nearly 40 percent of those incarcerated in federal prisons are African-American, many serving very long sentences for drug-related crimes. Many have some underlying medical conditions.

Many have lent their voice in support of Kilpatrick's request for clemency including Angela Stanton, founder of The American King Foundation, who was recently granted a pardon from President Trump. "One of the reasons I'm running for congress is because I understand the importance of restoration and justice. Kwame has served over 7 years in a cage being separated from his family for non-violent charges. He, just like those at the border, deserves to be reunited and given a second chance."

Pastor Jamal Bryant had this to say regarding Kilpatrick: "This is welcomed news for my friend and his family. I'm certain that Kwame will take advantage of this opportunity to make a positive contribution to society and fulfill his immense potential to do good and make a difference. We prayed and God answered."

EBONY has partnered with The Bail Project to launch HOME BY THE HOLIDAY, an initiative designed to combat mass incarceration and reunite families. Through this campaign, forces will be joined to raise funds for bailouts and to drive awareness about the urgent need for bail reform and the human impact of the cash bail system on communities of color.

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