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LOUISIANA DEMOCRATIC LEADERS CONDEMN FREEDOM CAUCUS CALL FOR VIOLENCE AGAINST PEACEFUL PROTESTERS

BATON ROUGE, LA — In response to the inflammatory and dangerous statement issued by the Louisiana Freedom Caucus, Democratic leaders across the Louisiana State Senate, House of Representatives, the Louisiana Democratic Party, and the Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus are united in strongly condemning what amounts to a thinly veiled endorsement of violence against peaceful protesters exercising their First Amendment rights.

Let us be clear: Louisiana law does not — and must not — serve as a weapon to silence dissent or intimidate citizens into submission. The statement issued by the Freedom Caucus is not about safety. It is about instilling fear, encouraging vigilantism, and creating a chilling effect on constitutionally protected protest, particularly in Black and marginalized communities.

What the Freedom Caucus has done is reckless and shameful. By preemptively labeling upcoming demonstrations as “riots” and suggesting that citizens use their vehicles in “self-defense” against those exercising their right to protest, they are attempting to incite harm under the guise of public safety. This is a political stunt rooted in fear-mongering — not law, not justice, and certainly not leadership.

We remind the public that the right to protest is not only protected by the United States Constitution — it is a cornerstone of our democracy. Louisiana has a long and proud history of civil rights activism and peaceful protest. To suggest that drivers should consider protesters as threats and use their vehicles as tools of escape or force is not just dangerous — it is an open invitation to violence and tragedy.

We’ve seen what happens when this kind of rhetoric goes unchecked. In 2017, a white supremacist drove his car into peaceful protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing Heather Heyer. Encouraging similar acts here in Louisiana is unconscionable and will not be tolerated.

We urge law enforcement officials, local leaders, and every responsible citizen to reject this rhetoric and reaffirm a commitment to both public safety and the sacred right to protest.

Signed,

Louisiana State Senate Democratic Caucus

Louisiana Democratic Party

Louisiana House Democratic Caucus

Louisiana Legislative Black Caucus