

## STATEMENT ON MASS ARRESTS ON JULY 4

On July 4, at approximately 6 PM, 55 peaceful protesters were detained by Tennessee Highway Patrol and the National Guard at the State Capitol. Protesters were charged with criminal trespassing. Some protesters also received charges of resisting arrest and assaulting an officer, although video and photographic evidence shows that protesters were peaceful and simply exercising their First Amendment rights. Earlier in the day, while the Capitol was "closed," non-protesters were allowed to enter the Capitol grounds to exercise, walk and lay around. In fact, the Capitol grounds were only "closed" to protesters.

During the arrests, protesters were forcefully pulled from the crowd, resulting in several injuries. Protesters who were walking away from the scene were also grabbed and detained. Property was seized without reason and some have yet to be returned. Protesters who simply laid on the ground were charged with resisting arrest. The National Guard brought out tear gas and rubber bullets as a demonstration of power and to fearmonger the people, without their name plates. Upon arrest, one protester experienced a panic attack and went into psychosis. It took more than 30 minutes for medical professionals to arrive on the scene, and when they did, the protester was sedated with ketamine (the same drug that killed Elijah McClain) against his will. The protester was not charged with resisting arrest or assault, although these were cited as the justification for use of force against him.

Protesters were detained for hours before being arrested and booked, and some remained in custody for over 12 hours. While in custody, protesters were denied medical care, refused access to food and water, and given little information on what was happening. Unconstitutional closed-door hearings were conducted, without attorneys. Protesters were corralled in small holding cells together, and social distancing guidelines were ignored. Additionally, some Black protesters were singled out and isolated for being disruptive, although similar behavior was exhibited by other non-Black protesters. Protesters also were exposed to bear mace while confined to small holding cells. Requests for medical attention were ignored or given inadequate care. Men and women were put in the same areas, even when an unknown arrestee not affiliated with the protestors started to masturbate. When asked to do something about it, the women protesters were told to "turn your back."

As one of the largest mass arrests at a peaceful protest in recent history, this moment will not go unnoticed. While Governor Bill Lee and THP hoped to deter our protest through unconstitutional violations of our rights, these arrests only serve to demonstrate our point about police brutality and the arbitrary enforcement of laws.