

Minnesota Republicans observe moment of silence for Derek Chauvin, police officer who murdered George Floyd

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On the second day of the Minnesota Republican Party convention in Duluth, Minnesota, delegates approved a motion to hold a minute of silence for Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer convicted in the 2020 murder of George Floyd.

According to reporting by media outlets including the *Minnesota Star Tribune* and statements cited by the Associated Press, the action took place during a formal session attended by several hundred delegates.

The reports said the motion was introduced by Christopher Rocco, a delegate from St. Paul. Rocco argued in favor of recognizing Chauvin and called for his exoneration by the state government. He also urged that President Donald Trump issue a federal pardon for Chauvin.

The *New York Times* quoted Rocco describing Chauvin to his fellow delegates as someone “who should get a state retrial, who should get a federal pardon.” In a *Times* phone interview, Rocco said he did not personally know Chauvin and that no one in the Republican Party leadership asked him to move the motion.

He told the paper, “I made that decision to do that, to stand up for someone who doesn’t have the ability to stand up for himself anymore—someone who, in my opinion, faced injustice.”

Such sentiments echo the mass pardons and commutations issued by Donald Trump of the insurrectionists who were convicted for their participation in the January 6 assault on the US Capitol and the recent failed effort to create a slush fund to compensate them for being “harmed” by the US government.

The motion at the Republican convention was

adopted by a voice vote. According to the Associated Press and local television coverage, convention chairing officials called for a voice vote rather than a recorded tally. Observers indicated that the “aye” votes were sufficient to carry the motion, though the absence of a roll call means that individual delegate positions were not formally recorded.

The *New York Times* reported that 2,300 delegates attended the two-day convention while the number of delegates on the floor at the time of the motion, which took place as the first order of business on Saturday morning, is unclear.

Derek Chauvin is the former Minneapolis police officer who was convicted in April 2021 in Hennepin County District Court on charges of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter in the death of George Floyd. Chauvin was later sentenced to 22.5 years in prison.

In 2022, according to the US Department of Justice, Chauvin pleaded guilty in federal court to violating Floyd’s civil rights and received a concurrent federal sentence.

Chauvin murdered George Floyd on May 25, 2020, during an arrest in Minneapolis. Video recorded by bystander Darnella Frazier, who was 17 at the time, shows Chauvin kneeling on Floyd’s neck for more than nine minutes while Floyd was restrained on the ground.

As documented in trial exhibits and widely reported by media outlets, Floyd can be heard repeatedly stating that he could not breathe and calling out for his mother, while bystanders demanded other officers to intervene to save his life to no avail.

The Hennepin County Medical Examiner’s report, entered as evidence at trial and cited in court

proceedings, determined that Floyd's death was a homicide caused by cardiopulmonary arrest complicating law enforcement subdual, restraint and neck compression. This means that Floyd's breathing and heart stopped (cardiopulmonary arrest) because of a lack of oxygen caused by law enforcement officers physically subduing him, pressing him to the ground (restraint) and compressing his neck.

The medical examiner's report also noted contributing conditions, including arteriosclerotic heart disease and fentanyl intoxication, but did not identify them as the primary cause of death.

Floyd's killing sparked a wave of protests across the United States and internationally. According to data compiled by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) and reported by major media outlets, demonstrations occurred in all 50 states and in numerous countries, making it one of the largest protest movements in recent history. Some estimates say that 26 million people participated in the protests within the US and that at least 8,700 demonstrations across 74 countries took place in the weeks after Floyd's killing.

The moment of silence at the Duluth convention drew the mildest of objections from Democratic Party officials who called it "inappropriate and offensive." For Republicans, the call for Chauvin's exoneration was not objected to but, according to the Associated Press, there were expressions of concern that the action was politically damaging.

The reactionary moment of silence at the convention in Duluth takes place while there is an ongoing campaign in far right and fascist circles challenging Chauvin's conviction. Arguments that Floyd's death was primarily caused by drug abuse or underlying health conditions have been circulating since his death and were presented as evidence during Chauvin's court proceedings.

These claims were rejected by the jury after extensive expert testimony. Legal analysts and medical experts cited by the *Washington Post* and NPR have noted that the jury's verdict reflected the weight of video evidence and medical findings presented at trial.

Additionally, in exchange for a capped federal sentence, Chauvin admitted that he willfully deprived George Floyd of his constitutional right to be free from unreasonable force. He acknowledged that he kept his knee on Floyd's neck and back even after Floyd lost

consciousness and stopped breathing.

Chauvin also admitted to willfully violating Floyd's rights by failing to provide him with medical aid when he was in distress and had stopped breathing.

Meanwhile, the renewed campaign to exonerate Chauvin is taking place following the murders of Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis in January 2026 by federal immigration officials and ICE agents. While these murders were also captured on smartphone video from multiple angles along with police body cameras and have been seen by tens of millions of people, no charges have been brought against the killers of Good and Pretti.

Minnesota prosecutors and state officials have been seeking access to evidence so they can assess whether to bring charges, but the federal government has blocked access to the evidence and not yet turned over everything requested, and no final charging decision has yet been made.



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