



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Portsmouth NAACP Reviewing Circumstance at Track Competition

Portsmouth, VA – We have and will continue to review the circumstances surrounding Alaila Everett, a student at I.C. Norcom High School that occurred during a track and field competition this past Tuesday. At the outset, we want to express our deepest thoughts and prayers to Alaila and the Everett Family during this difficult time. The level of attention that they have received has been overwhelming and, in many cases, extremely concerning. We have been in communication with Alaila's parents who both deeply care about their family, I.C. Norcom High School and our Portsmouth community. Additionally, we would like to express our thoughts and prayers to the Tucker family during this time and wish them well.

Our review of the situation has been focused not only on the events that happened on Tuesday during the track and field competition but also on the response in which racial slurs and death threats have been leveled towards Alaila and her family. These matters have been brought to our attention as well as the possibility of pending criminal charges, which we view with deep concerns. First, we want to make it abundantly clear that we denounce any type of racial slur or threat in any form towards anyone involved in the situation. We will use every resource within our disposal to ensure those individuals who use slurs or death threats are reported and held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. Furthermore, we encourage our community to report these incidents to local authorities or bring it to our attention as hate speech, slurs or threats on the basis of race will not be tolerated.

Additionally, it has been brought to our attention that criminal charges may be pending because of the circumstances that occurred this past Tuesday. We have been in communication with our Lynchburg NAACP branch leaders as well as our Virginia State Conference representative concerning this possibility. We are committed collectively to ensuring that the criminal justice system, which we feel is not warranted in this situation, is executed fairly and based on due process. We encourage Liberty University authorities and the Commonwealth to exercise caution and restraint in this situation, as the individuals involved are minors. We will continue to advocate for Alaila's record to remain void of any criminal proceedings.

Alaila is NOT AN ATTACKER and media headlines that allude towards that in any way is shameful. We understand the sensitivity of the circumstances for both athletes and their families involved but this narrative must not go unaddressed. Alaila is an honor student and a star athlete at the historic I.C. Norcom High School. From all accounts, she is an exceptional young leader and scholar whose athletic talent has been well-documented and recognized across our state. She has carried herself with integrity both on and off the field and any narrative that adjudicates her guilty of any criminal activity is a violation of her due process rights.



Our hope is that this situation can be resolved with both athletes continuing their athletic pursuits without any implications, and we will continue to express that both publicly and privately as necessary. We will have further statements as necessary as the situation resolves.

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Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. From the ballot box to the classroom, the thousands of dedicated workers, organizers, leaders and members who make up the NAACP continue to fight for social justice for all Americans