

## **Andrew Kearsa Accountability for Denial of Medical Care Act**

On May 11, 2017, Andrew Kearsa, a 36-year-old Black man, died of a heart attack in the back of a police cruiser after begging a police officer for help. Instead of providing Mr. Kearsa with medical assistance, the officer dismissed his pleas and waited precious minutes until after Mr. Kearsa became nonresponsive to call for medical assistance. Despite failing to seek potentially life-saving care for Mr. Kearsa, the officer involved was not charged with a crime.

Andrew Kearsa's last words, "I can't breathe," have been uttered by Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, George Floyd, and too many other Black Americans who have died in police custody. While there is work at the state level to establish requirements that state law enforcement officers obtain medical assistance for individuals experiencing health issues while in their custody, there is no federal law that imposes criminal liability on federal law enforcement officers who fail to seek medical assistance when individuals in their care are experiencing medical emergencies.

**The Andrew Kearsa Accountability for Denial of Medical Care Act of 2025** would:

- Hold federal law enforcement officials criminally liable when they fail to obtain or provide medical care to individuals in their custody who are experiencing medical distress.
- Require training for federal law enforcement officials on assisting individuals in medical distress.
- Direct the Inspectors General of the agencies that employ federal law enforcement officers responsible for investigating potential violations and referring them to the Department of Justice for prosecution.

**Statement from Angelique Negroni-Kearsa, widow of Andrew Kearsa:** "I never imagined that three simple words could change the world—three words that continue to haunt my dreams and define the struggle we face today. I can't breathe. Those were the last words my husband, Andrew Kearsa, uttered as life slipped away from him—pleading for help, begging for mercy. His cries went unanswered. His suffering was ignored. His life was stolen. Andrew did not die by accident. He did not die by fate. He died because of neglect—the cruel indifference of those sworn to protect and serve. Confined to the back seat of a police vehicle, he called for medical attention, his voice a desperate lifeline. Yet, those who held his fate in their hands chose to turn away.

But this tragedy is not just Andrew's story. It is the story of Eric Garner, who also cried out, I can't breathe. It is the story of Mike Brown, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and so many others—names etched into our collective conscience, each a reminder of lives cut short by systemic injustice.

Ignorance and indifference—these are the true killers in our communities. They are the silent weapons of a system that has devalued Black lives for generations. But we cannot and will not remain silent. We must stand together. We must raise our voices. We must demand change.

Now is the time to act. It is time to vote. It is time to reform a system that has too often ignored our suffering. Because all lives cannot matter until Black lives matter. When they tell you to keep your head down, to stay silent in the face of injustice—I ask you to do the opposite. Raise your voice. Let it be heard. Shout from the rooftops that you are here, that you are watching, that you are fighting for a better tomorrow. This is not just about anger—it is about love, about protecting our families, about securing a future where our children do not have to live in fear.

To those who have stood with me—who have stood with Andrew, with Eric, with George, with all those whose lives have been stolen—I thank you. Your courage, your solidarity, your resilience are the light that guides us through these darkest of times.

And to Senator Elizabeth Warren and Representative Ayanna Pressley, I extend my deepest gratitude. Your tireless efforts in passing the Andrew Kearsse Law are a testament to what is possible when we fight for justice, when we refuse to accept injustice as the norm.

But our work is far from over. Let us continue to fight for a future where I can't breathe is no longer a desperate cry for life, but a joyful gasp of laughter. A future where every child can grow up with their fathers and mothers. A future where everyone can breathe freely—without fear, without hate, without injustice. This is not just a plea. It is a promise. We will keep going. We will keep fighting. And we will never forget.”