



Marc 26, 2024

## **Statement from the CCD Chair and Vice-Chair on the Death of Ryan Gainer**

The Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities (CCD) Chair and Vice-Chair expresses outrage and profound sorrow over the tragic death of Ryan Gainer, a Black teenager with autism. Ryan's family sought crisis intervention and called 911 for assistance. Instead of getting the support they needed, he was killed by a deputy sheriff.<sup>1</sup>

People with disabilities, especially Black people and other people of color, face heightened risks of arrest and harm at the hands of law enforcement. Studies have shown that law enforcement personnel typically lack training to respond appropriately to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are experiencing mental health crises.<sup>2</sup> And some have also argued that there is little evidence that police training is effective.

Tragedies like Ryan's should never happen, yet they persist. That is why CCD released a statement from CCD member signatories offering recommendations that would reduce police involvement in these circumstances and instead allow better-resourced disability service systems or other social or human services professionals to intervene.<sup>3</sup>

We extend our deepest condolences to Ryan's family and friends and join them in mourning this senseless loss of life.

Carol Tyson, CCD Chair and Claire Stanley, CCD Vice-Chair

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<sup>1</sup> Jamiles Lartey. "When Police Encounters with Autistic People Turn Fatal," *Marshall Project Closing Argument Newsletter*. March 16, 2024. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2024/03/16/california-police-autism-disability>

<sup>2</sup> Sandra Larson, "It's Vital to Increase Police Understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorders," *HealthCity*. May 27, 2021. <https://healthcity.bmc.org/population-health/its-vital-police-better-understand-autism-spectrum-disorder>

<sup>3</sup> CCD 2024 Statement on Reducing Police Responses to People with Disabilities. *Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities*. March 21, 2024. <https://www.c-c-d.org/fichiers/CCD-2024-Police-Responses-Statement-Final-032124.pdf>