



PRESS RELEASE

April 8, 2015

Media Contact:

Tirien Steinbach / Executive Director / (510) 548-4040 ext. 373 / tsteinbach@ebclc.org

**Statement by the East Bay Community Law Center about the Killing of
Walter L. Scott**

BERKELEY, CA — The lawyers and advocates of the [East Bay Community Law Center](http://www.ebclc.org) extend our deepest sympathy and condolences to the family of Walter L. Scott, a 50-year-old African-American man recently slain by a police officer in North Charleston, South Carolina.

On Tuesday, April 7th, Officer Michael T. Slager was charged with murder after he was caught on [video](#) fatally shooting Mr. Scott eight times in the back while he fled.

Both the fatal shooting of Mr. Scott and the consequences that Officer Slager faces beg the crucial question: What if video of this incident didn't exist? In many recent, similar police shootings, we have seen how police departments, district attorneys and the media have justified the lethal use of force because of an officer claiming to have felt endangered by the victim. Too often this reasoning shifts the public's perception of events, leaving those who've fallen victim unable to defend themselves. This time, there was indisputable proof of Officer Slager's criminal misconduct. But what about the hundreds of other people of color who are killed each year at the hands of the police?

There is some justice in the fact that the killer of Walter Scott, unlike those responsible for the deaths of [Eric Garner](#), [Michael Brown](#), and [Tamir Rice](#), will face prosecution for murder. Police accountability can exist. However, for thousands of people who are harassed, brutalized or even killed by police – where there was not a viral video – there is no justice. Moreover, as a society, we have not yet built the commitment to transformational changes in laws, policies, practices and culture that will end pervasive discrimination and abuses of power.

EBCLC stands in solidarity with the victims and families of those slain by police, and those who continue to fight against police brutality. On behalf of the communities we serve, we demand

that police departments across the country rise to the challenge of stopping these senseless killings and fostering a culture of true service and protection for *all* citizens.

#

The East Bay Community Law Center - provides free legal services to eligible East Bay clients. Since its founding in 1988 by law students at UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law, EBCLC has become the largest provider of free legal services in the East Bay. To learn more about EBCLC, go to www.ebclc.org.