

## Baltimore Braces Itself for Freddie Gray Case Jury's Verdict



**Summary:** *Baltimore is anticipating protests in violence in response to possible outcomes of verdict on the Gray case.*

Baltimore is bracing itself now that the jurors on the Freddie Gray case are wrapping up deliberation on the fate of Officer William Porter. Porter, 26, faces up to 25 years in prison if convicted of manslaughter, assault, misconduct and reckless endangerment. The case is the latest in many that pose the systems question as to if the police force is failing to do its duty in protecting the rights of African-Americans. In this regard, following Gray's death, after a stormy and emotional funeral, looting, vandalism, and violent protests have broken out like a rash in Baltimore, and more is anticipated after the verdict is reached.

"Whether you agree or whether you disagree with the jury's ultimate verdict, our reaction has to be one of respect in Baltimore's neighborhood," said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who has opened an emergency operations center to handle possible protests, and who has also previously fired Police Commissioner Anthony Batts last July, in response to the increase in violence after Gray's death.

Bracing the response of vigilante justice, this second justice system imposed on the state by angry protesters is changing the dynamic of how police do their work. Handling politically charged emotions concerns schools as well, as city schools CEO Gregory Thornton wrote parents that the school will use the "Situation" to teach students "appropriate ways to express dissent."

"We need to make clear that student walkouts, vandalism, civil disorder, and any form of violence are not acceptable under any circumstances and that students who participate in such behavior will face consequences," he wrote.

Susan Goering, executive director of the ACLU, responded, saying this letter "assumes students would engage in violent acts, assumes that students only want to express their emotions, not rational views about the conduct of police and lack of accountability, and it misses an opportunity to affirmatively engage students who want to be politically engaged in these issues.

Further complications in the city are anticipated, as the jurors deliberate. The members include four black women, three black men, two white men, and three white women.

Porter also is black, and did not arrest Gray on April 12. He is instead accused of breaking police protocols by failing to buckle Gray in the police van, and failing to seek immediate medical assistance. Instead of taking him to the hospital, the driver disregarded Porter's agreement with Gray that a visit to the hospital would be best. They instead picked up another arrest, and by the time they arrived at the Western District Police station, Gray was unresponsive. A week later, he died. His spinal injury was the cause.

Source: [USAToday](#)