



Under embargo until Thursday April 6, 2023 at 4pm CDT

Duluth Branch NAACP Calls on St. Louis County Prosecutor Kim Maki to Drop Charges against Steven Cooper

The Duluth Branch NAACP will hold a press conference on the steps of the St. Louis County Courthouse in Duluth, MN on Thursday April 6th, 2023 at 4pm. The Branch is calling on St. Louis County Prosecutor Kim Maki to drop firearms possession charges against Steven Cooper, who we believe is being treated unreasonably harshly in part based on the fact that he is black.

In July 2022, Steven Cooper was cleaning out the vehicle of his recently deceased brother when he found a gun and ammunition. He did what he thought was the right thing: he wrapped the gun in a sweatshirt, put it inside the secured door of his apartment building, and waited for his parole officer to arrive.

Cooper's parole officer called the Duluth police. Due to his previous criminal record, Cooper was arrested for possession of a firearm and is now under threat of returning to prison. In an interview with the Minnesota Reformer, Cooper says "I could have easily thrown that thing in a river. I could have easily [given] it to somebody ... dumped it in the garbage [...] here's the difference from the person that I used to be in 2006 and right now."

Minnesota law doesn't grant exceptions for people convicted of violent felonies to accidentally or briefly possess firearms.

The Duluth NAACP wants to know:

- Why is Steven being punished for doing the right thing?
- How can we expect to get firearms off the streets if there is a possibility for retaliation by the law?
- What role did Steven's race play in his treatment from the Duluth Police Department and St. Louis County prosecutors?

Learn more about Steven's case in this [article](#) from the Minnesota Reformer.

Watch Steven's [arrest video on facebook](#).

Sincerely,
Duluth Branch NAACP