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NATIONAL WRITERS UNION, UAW LOCAL 1981

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For Immediate Release
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The National Writers Union to EBONY: "See You in Court!"

NEW YORK, NY – The National Writers Union/UAW Local 1981 (NWU) is preparing to go to court after the EBONY Media Organization (EMO) and its parent company, the Clear View Group (CVG) failed to meet a self-imposed deadline to compensate as many as 50 freelance writers who are owed as much as \$200,000.

After mounting media attention due to the #EbonyOwes hashtag on Twitter, EBONY Media released a statement to NBC BLK on June 3 affirming their commitment to paying all of their freelance writers, in full, by the end of June.

"This is completely unacceptable," NWU President Larry Goldbetter said about the missed deadline. "We took them at their word, in good faith, despite some freelancers going more than a year without payment. Now, we move on to the next step."

The union represents 30 writers who are owed about \$60,000. EBONY did issue checks to eleven writers for a total of \$18,000. Only three of those were paid in full.

He added, "Creatives don't work for free and there are very real consequences when we don't get paid. While EBONY Media executives from CVG were throwing lavish Super Bowl parties and Hollywood events, unpaid freelancers were struggling to pay the rent."

EBONY writer Kimberly Hayes Taylor is a caregiver for her father with serious health issues. Her missing payments were budgeted to take her father to visit family before beginning medical treatments. "This whole situation is already heartbreaking enough," she said. "The stress of not getting paid and having no idea when that will happen makes it even worse. EBONY Magazine has created a great hardship for us, and I resent it after the excellent job I've done for them."

Writer Marissa Charles struggled to stay afloat financially when money promised never arrived. “I’m grateful that EBONY has finally paid me, but I’m frustrated that it took them so long. They owed me a substantial amount of money that I was relying upon to pay my bills. Their long delay set me back financially.”

Goldbetter hopes the dispute with EBONY Media will serve as an example for other freelancers and publishers. “EBONY is not the only offender,” he said. “Non-payment is an epidemic for freelance writers. That is why we joined the campaign to establish the Freelance Isn’t Free law in NYC last year. Many publishers feel they can treat individual freelancers any way they want. What’s different here is that EBONY freelancers are standing together, as a Union, and they are drawing a lot of attention in the industry. We’re hearing from writers at other publications as well.”