

Resolution of Support from Columbus Community Bill of Rights seeking a peaceful reconciliation between Columbus and Franklin County Law Enforcement Agencies and its citizens

Columbus Community Bill of Rights is a local community-based organization which has been working to gain local control on environmental issues arising from fracking for gas and oil, which the State Legislature and Governor have blocked. We are concerned about the quality of our air, water, and soil because contamination hurts people. Our social environment is also crucial in maintaining health for its citizens. So, we join in relating to a diverse group of local leaders who have made strong commitments to push for social justice in our County's politics. We honor our local allies who face racial discrimination and violence firsthand, members of Franklin County Grassroot Democrats, and for their influence in the wording of our resolution. We firmly and vocally stand against racism, anti-Blackness, white supremacy, and police brutality, and a host of severe social disparities that exist between ZIP Codes in the County. COVID-19, due to an ongoing history of systemic racial inequities, is already causing disproportionately high rates of death in the Black community, with Black people dying at three times the rate of their white neighbors.

The recent murder of four unarmed and innocent Black people (Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade, and George Floyd) is morally reprehensible. The inaction regarding the arrest and trial of their killers, all of whom have been in some way connected to their respective police departments, is unacceptable.

Franklin County is also complicit in these actions, with one of the highest rates of police killing Black people per capita. Columbus is known for its over-policing, racial profiling, and systemic violence against people from Black and Brown communities. People of color should not have to worry about disproportionately being murdered at the hands of the police department that is supposed to protect them.

The following people should be alive today, and they would be, if our city valued Black people's lives:

Henry Green, Tyre King, Kourtney Hahn, Queen Alahzar, Destin Thomas, Obbie Shepard, Calvin Reynolds, Keith Burke, Kenneth Herring, Ledarrin Mixon, Emmanuel Gatewood, Elisha Glass, Qusean Whitten, Kawme Patrick, Amanual Dagebo, Joseph Givens, Jason White, Kareem Jones, Tyshawn Hancock, Marese Collins, Kaleb Alexander, Jaquarius Robinson, Julius Tate, Danny Thornton, Jonathan Rodgers, Michael Harrington, Mohamed Barry, Abdul Artan, Nasir Abdi, Derrick Alexander, Juvon Williams, Dante Miller, Nyl O'Day, Joshua Brown, Joseph Jewel, Tasjon Osbourne, Johntwa Bosley, Francis Owens, Jermon Fletcher, Abdirahman Salad, Hasim Rasheed

There is no excuse for these or other lives lost. Columbus has failed to address these issues, reflecting a narrative upholding anti-Blackness and systemic racism.

At this time of justified social unrest, our own police department has used excessive force against protestors in Columbus, as evidenced by their open use of tear gas, wooden and rubber bullets, pepper spray, and physical violence on May 28, May 29, May 30, May 31, and June 1, 2020. None of these occurrences are the first of their kind. These events demonstrate the need for immediate change and action.

We write to affirm our support for the upholding of our civil and human rights and the dignity of all human life. Our County has the responsibility, along with all other organized bodies, to elevate the importance of Black lives. As recent police and political actions show, Black lives are not equally valued in our County or our society.

Therefore, we, the Columbus Community Bill of Rights, echo the demands of the People's Justice Project:

- **PJP Recommendation 70:** Establish an independent civilian review board.
- **PJP Recommendation 37:** Require a signed Morality Clause for all officers that requires officers to agree to equal protection for all citizens, to denounce any cultural supremacist groups, and to report any officer's malfeasance to Internal Affairs.
- **PJP Recommendation 71:** Amend City Charter to create a city-funded, operationally-independent, professionally-staffed, public-facing entity empowered to participate fully in criminal or administrative investigations involving CPD personnel.
- **PJP Recommendation 72:** Implement a process for independent investigation of 1) officer use of force, including but not limited to, officer use of force resulting in death, officer involved shootings, and in-custody injuries and deaths; and 2) complaints about serious Columbus Division of Police officer misconduct.
- **PJP Recommendation 76:** The city should have an internal whistleblower "hotline" or access-point that can allow anonymous submissions from officers of abuse, racism, harassment, etc.
- **PJP Recommendation 19:** The CDP Training Academy should add and integrate specific language into training curriculum regarding crowd control that specifically addresses citizen's individual civil rights, including First Amendment rights and the right to protest, specifically relating to non-aggressive police tactics for non-violent protests/marches. This should also include the opportunities created to increase city/citizen engagement while allowing police to protect rather than using unnecessary violent tactics during non-violent situations.
- **PJP Recommendation 46:** Create a Youth Services unit.
- **PJP Recommendation 28:** Integrate into each training module the impact of implicit and/or explicit bias, including racism, and strategies for officers to use in recognizing and mitigating their own biases.
- **PJP Recommendation 22:** Officers should be trained on how to modify behavior to de-escalate situations with youth.
- **PJP Recommendation 29:** Integrate into each training module the impact of cultural competence and strategies for officers to use to ensure the equitable treatment of persons regardless of background.

In addition, the Columbus Community Bill of Rights urges the following:

1. Require that decisions about whether to prosecute, as well as the actual prosecution, be turned over to someone from a different county, who is usually not dependent upon CPD officers to be witnesses in court.
2. Enable City and County Law enforcement agencies to establish mandatory weekly group and/or individual counseling services for all law enforcement personnel to be conducted by mental health professionals, to enable members to cope with high stress job related experiences. No one should experience discrimination or harassment as a result of seeking such services.

In addition, we urge studying what has already been found to work, as in this study: <http://useofforceproject.org/#project>. Based on this study, we urged adoption of at least four of the following eight policies: requirement of comprehensive reporting, requirement that officer exhaust all other means before shooting, banning of chokeholds and strangleholds, application of use of force continuum, requirement of de-escalation, restrictions on shooting at moving vehicles, requirement to intervene, requirement to warn before shooting. As the study notes, more restrictive use of force policies “substantially reduce the number of people killed by police in America....Officers in police departments with more restrictive policies in place are actually less likely to be killed in the line of duty, less likely to be assaulted, and have similar likelihood of sustaining an injury during an assault. Moreover, our findings show police departments with more restrictive use of force policies have similar crime rates, including similar violent crime rates, as police departments with less restrictive use of force policies.”

These demands are supported by the undersigned. We thank racial justice advocates across our country, especially in Minneapolis and here in the city of Columbus, for their leadership and guidance on ways to prevent future injustices and move towards a more equitable society. The disregard for the BIPOC community (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) can no longer be tolerated.

Signed,

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