

ARLINGTON BRANCH #7047

NAACP

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June 16, 2020

The Honorable Libby Garvey
Chairwoman
Arlington County Board
2100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 300
Arlington, Virginia 22201
countyboard@arlingtonva.us

Dear Chairwoman Garvey and Members of the County Board:

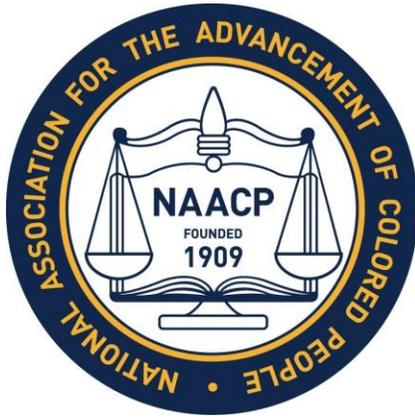
On behalf of the members of Arlington Branch NAACP#7047 and over 9,600 petitioners, we urge you to listen to the members of the local community who have requested and continue to request that the Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) implements, as soon as possible, five research-backed life-saving measures listed below. These demands are based, in large, on those recommendations of the 2015 President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing¹ that have the strongest base of evidence to support their effectiveness, as reported by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.²

1) Establish a citizen's review board with a subpoena power. According to the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), civilian oversight protects civil rights, supports effective policing, ensures greater accountability, helps manage risk, increases confidence in police, and builds bridges between communities and police forces. In today's climate of civilian unrest and lack of trust in police integrity, establishing a citizen's review board would not only bring Arlington County in line with such great cities as Portland, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Kansas City and Albany, but improve trust between ACPD and our community by ensuring public confidence through accountability and transparency.

2) Implement the Body-Worn Camera (BWC) program. Surprisingly, Arlington County remains the only jurisdiction of its size in the D.C. region without a functioning BWC program. To his credit, the County Manager has indicated willingness to propose its implementation in the CY2021 Capital Improvement Plan. However, until the funding is provided and the equipment is purchased, the talk of this program will be of little value. As community partners, we are willing offer any time and resources that we may have available, to assist the ACPD in moving quickly towards this goal.

¹ COPS Office. 2015. *President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Implementation Guide: Moving from Recommendations to Action*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

² International Association of Chiefs of Police. *Starting With What Works: Using Evidence-Based Strategies to Improve Community-Police Relations*.



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3) Revise use-of-force policies to (a) ban the use of knee and choke holds, and (b) to clearly define rules on escalation with at least six levels of steps.

4) Increase transparency by making individual officer misconduct and disciplinary histories publicly available. It is vital to promote examples of procedural justice and legitimacy by practicing these principles internally; availability of this information to the public would go greatly towards promoting the public's trust in the integrity of the police force.

5) Consider denial of recertification credentials to officers whose use of deadly force was determined to be unwarranted under the federal guidelines.

The need for swift implementation of these measures is supported by ACPD's own data. Arlington County is comprised of 75% white (excluding latinx) and 10% black residents, among others³. Nonetheless, 78% of all warnings and citations to residents in 2016 were issued to white residents, and 14% were issued to black residents.⁴ More alarmingly, only 66% of residents arrested for part II offenses⁵ were white, while 30% were black.⁶ Notably, the ACPD statistics include members of the latinx community in the category of "white" population, which effectively misrepresents the data for "white" residents/offenders. Moreover, in 2019, ACPD saw a 72% increase in use-of-force incidents, and between 2015 and 2019, a 25% increase in racially-biased policing complaints. These data point to a troubling trend.

The events of the past several weeks, beginning with the murder of George Floyd, and continuing with the unnecessarily harsh treatment of peaceful protesters and the recent tazing of an unarmed black man in Fairfax County, are tragically not new. But, while the prior acts of violence against unarmed black men and children led to some changes at the ACPD, such as enhanced reporting requirements for use-of-force incidents, a truly meaningful reform is yet to be implemented. We cannot stand by and wait for another George Floyd to die, this time on Arlington County streets. We urge you to act now.

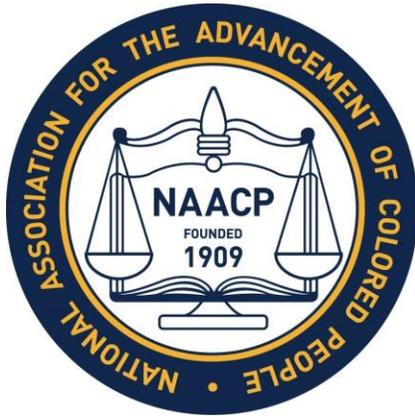
Local elected and appointed government officials, law enforcement agencies, and the communities they serve are a three-legged stool in the effort to heal and restore community trust. Each leg must be in place to support a comprehensive approach to reduce crime and build trust and

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.

⁴ The latest data that was made available by ACPD as of the date of this letter is 2016.

⁵ Counterfeit/Forgery, Destruction of Property, Disorderly Conduct, Drug/Narcotic Offenses, Drunkenness, False Pretenses, Impersonation, Liquor Law Violations and Weapon Law Violations.

⁶ On a larger scale, while the population of Virginia is approximately 68% white and 19% black, the ACPD officers issued traffic citations and warnings to white drivers in 65% of cases and to black drivers in 26% of cases. The data show similar disproportionality in numbers of offenders arrested for part II offenses: 57% white and 42% black.



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legitimacy. Success in our community will require collaboration and partnerships among our three groups, and we are reassured by the Board's and ACPD's demonstrated willingness to engage with us. This is why we are confident that the ACPD can work cooperatively with the Board to implement the above life-saving measures.

Attached to this letter is a petition originated by an Arlington high school student Ilene Kruger on June 5, 2020, with 1765 signatures, as well as a petition originated by the NAACP Arlington Branch 7047 on June 7, 2020 with 7919 signatures⁷, showing the community and other's support in not only initiating a dialogue but also in seeing tangible changes to ACPD's policies and procedures. We look forward to your response and to working with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Mr. Julius D. "JD" Spain, Sr.
President, Arlington Branch NAACP and
Regional Vice President, Region 3-North
Virginia State Conference NAACP

2 Attachments:

Ilene Kruger's Change.org petition (83 pages)

NAACP Arlington Branch 7047 Change.org petition (355 pages)

Copies to:

Libby Garvey, Arlington County Board Chair (lgarvey@arlingtonva.us)

Matt de Ferranti, Arlington County Board Member (mdeferranti@arlingtonva.us)

Katie Kristol, Arlington County Board Member (kcristol@arlingtonva.us)

Christian Dorsey, Arlington County Board Member (cdorsey@arlingtonva.us)

James Schwartz, Deputy County Manager (jschwa@arlingtonva.us)

Steve MacIsaac, County Attorney (cao@arlingtonva.us)

Parisa Dehghani-Tafti, Commonwealth's Attorney for Arlington County
(CWA_info@arlingtonva.us) and pdtafti@arlingtonva.us

⁷ The signatories on the two petitions have not been cross-referenced.