



**NAACP**

## STATEMENT AND REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

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The number and nature of recent police shootings in Clark County, Washington are alarming and a matter of grave concern to our community. The last five shootings in Vancouver have involved mostly people of color and a young white man known to be mentally ill. To ensure the expectation of safety by all citizens of Vancouver, there are still too many unanswered questions regarding the facts and circumstances surrounding each of the shootings and we eagerly await completion and publication of the investigation reports. Our desire is to obtain the facts and be assured that offices within our justice system have thoroughly reviewed results of past investigations, will ensure thorough reviews of ongoing investigations and take all appropriate steps to rectify any undesirable behavior on the part of law enforcement officers. As pointed out in the September 5, 2018 *Joint Statement* between the NAACP and LULAC organizations, “our total community must have trust in our law enforcement and prosecutorial authorities to sustain the spirit of livability” in Vancouver, WA.

Notwithstanding the question of whether a shooting can be legally justified, our concern is also whether a culture exists within the police departments within Clark County that influences premature, inappropriate and overly aggressiveness actions through use of deadly force in situations involving minorities and underprivileged citizens. Cultural beliefs and behavior can be separate and apart from what can be legally justified. We believe that you in your roles as public officials, share this concern and should be committed to take every reasonable and possible step to answer this question. We are requesting that you cooperate with a joint NAACP and LULAC review of police shootings in Clark County. The purpose of this review is the transparency of facts from police shootings that have negatively impacted our community. It would promote towards a desired community comfort level for bias-free law enforcement in our community. Accordingly, please provide the following information:

- 1) The Columbian Newspaper reported, there have been 28 police shootings in Vancouver, Washington over the past 25 years. Please reconcile this number if incorrect. If correct, how many of those 28 shootings involved people of color? The Columbian Newspaper reported, out of the 28 shootings, 16 were fatal. If incorrect, please reconcile this figure. How many of those fatally wounded were people of color?
- 2) Which of those shootings in the past 10 years involved guns, knives, or other dangerous weapons in possession of the deceased or injured; which ones clearly showed immediate/imminent serious bodily threats to the police officer or other members of the public? What action was done by the deceased or injured prior to police officers firing their weapons? How long between initial contact with the deceased or injured did a police officer discharge their firearm? What warnings/commands did police officers give to the injured/deceased? What response did the deceased or injured exhibit? What was the race and ethnicity of the police?
- 3) Within the past 10 years how many calls were received by the police/dispatch reporting subjects with dangerous weapons? From what areas were the calls reported? Show types of weapons for each call. What was the race and ethnicity of the persons who had dangerous weapons?
- 4) Within the past 10 years, what language did the persons who were reported to have dangerous weapons speak? If not English, were interpreters dispatched to the location of the individual. Which of these reports resulted in police shootings?

- 5) Within the past 10 years, who were the police officers involved and what are their current positions with a police department within Clark County, or anywhere else within our justice system; which officers were involved in more than one shooting?
- 6) Have there been any prior citizen complaints against the police officers involved in shootings e.g., excessive force, false arrests domestic violence, etc.?
- 7) Were any of the individuals reported to have dangerous weapons disabled or known to have a mental disability? Of the individuals reported to have dangerous weapons, had the police received prior reports regarding these individuals?
- 8) Regarding the recent shooting of 29-year old homeless man, Mr. Pierce, it was reported that he had been a patient involved in Clark County's mental health treatment community and it was common knowledge on the street that he carried gun replicas with him. Was he not known to local police officers when shot and killed?
- 9) Regarding the recent shooting of the 16-year old. Reportedly, he was "... brandishing a knife...". What was he doing, saying, and how far away were humans when killed?
- 10) Regarding the recent shooting of the 43-year old Mr. Carlos Hunter, who, "...had past ties to a gang...", and "...was armed" and "...uncooperative...", what exactly was he doing, saying; where was the gun found when he was shot and killed? Describe exactly what "past ties to a gang" means? What was the name of the gang? When was he known to be last involved? Where was the gang located? What type of criminal activity, if any, were members of the gang involved in? Which reports resulted in convictions and what was the criminal act(s)?
- 11) Regarding the recent three police shootings, please explain what non-deadly force options (e.g. rubber bullets, tasers, nets, pepper spray, corralling, backing-away and increasing the perimeter span, etc.) were available to the police and precisely how the policemen were trained to make alternative non-lethal choices in those situations.
- 12) Were de-escalation techniques used in either of the recent three shootings? And were the officers involved in the shootings up to date with their required trainings?
- 13) Specify the amount and type of racial and cultural awareness, sensitivity or anti-bias training the police departments are required to take, respectively. Provide the curriculum, delivery method and sources providing internal or external instruction.
- 14) Please provide the final investigative reports including narratives and prosecutorial conclusions on each incident pertaining to the last 10 shootings. Please illustrate trending information, including areas of which shootings occurred.

We assume that the spirit of your joint statement released on August 29, 2018 by Clark County Sheriff Chuck Atkins and you, Prosecuting Attorney Tony Golik, regarding commitment to reject acts of hate, bigotry, harassment and violence, includes commitment to the alleviate unnecessary violence by police officers as well. Again, "...we also know that our continued protection and livability requires confidence in the integral support provided by law enforcement and prosecuting authorities." As stated in the aforementioned *Joint Statement*, "...the Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act of 2018 (S. 3195) provides incentives for local police organizations to adopt performance-based standards to ensure that incidents of misconduct will be minimized through appropriate management, training and oversight protocols and that if such incidents do occur, that they will be properly investigated."

Please help assure us that we can continue relying on this concept by providing us with transparent information as requested. We are also interested in meeting with you to further discuss this concern after information is received.

As we continue to experience heightened interests from our community regarding these questions, we'll continue to ask for more community members to join us in this fact-finding endeavor. Again, our desire is to obtain the facts and ensure a major focus on the expectation of safety and community healing.

Thank you for your support on this matter!

*Signed 03/22/2019*

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Bridgette Fahnbulleh  
President, NAACP Vancouver  
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*Signed 03/22/2019*

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Diana Perez  
President,  
SW Washington LULAC  
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*Signed 03/22/2019*

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Lynn Marzette  
Chairman, Legal Redress Committee  
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*Signed 03/22/2019*

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Hector Hinojosa  
Director,  
Washington State LULAC