



City of San José Youth Commission

June 9, 2020

The Honorable Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA 95113

Subject: Protests Surrounding Racism and Police Brutality

Dear Honorable Mayor, City Council, and Police Chief,

We, the San José Youth Commission, are appalled at the murder of George Floyd, a result of police brutality, and we condemn the actions of Derek Chauvin and all police officers that abuse their power. In light of these events, and our police force's response to the ongoing protests, it is the Commission's belief that we as a City need to re-evaluate and change our system of policing.

We recognize that the majority of police officers in San Jose, and across the country, are not racist and do their best to maintain peace in our city and uphold the law. However, we must ask ourselves, how much longer can these protests last before we as a city take action on the systematic killing of people of color? The protests mean so much more than the murder of George Floyd; protesters are fighting for change in our system of justice because it has become obvious that nearly every police force has an aspect of corruption to it, including San Jose.

In fact, the most recent and striking example of police brutality in San Jose at the time this letter was written was the attack on community leader Derrick Sanderlin. Mr. Sanderlin approached officers shooting rubber bullets at a group of protesters and peacefully asked the officers to stop. He was then shot in the groin by an officer at the scene and, as a result, may be unable to have children. Unfortunately, Mr. Sanderlin's case is not unique; protesters in San Jose have been met with **tear gas, rubber bullets, and flash-bang grenades**. Even worse, youth are being hit with tear gas as well. So, for the safety of our constituents, we call upon the San José Police Department to end their use of tear gas, and other violent weapons, against peaceful protestors.

Additionally, we see Jared Yuen in our own city abusing his power in a now-viral video where he screams profanity at a peaceful protester. When the protester responded in a similar manner, Yuen shot rubber bullets at them. In addition, there were multiple calls during the June 2nd City Council meeting to have Jared Yuen removed from the police force entirely, not to have him relocated, in order for justice to

be served. Police brutality still exists within the United States, but it is our job to ensure that our police force does not reflect the values of Jared Yuen.

Moreover, it is our understanding that such police brutality is a product of the deep-rooted inequalities and institutionalized racism that have systematically oppressed people of color for hundreds of years in the forms of slavery, segregation, and now, police brutality. As a Youth Commission, we must emphasize the effects that this systematic racial inequality has on youth of color; they do not get to choose the circumstances they are born into and are consistently underrepresented, inadequately supported, and provided with far fewer resources and opportunities than other youth in the city.

Nonetheless, we acknowledge that there have been instances of looting and violence, but we would like to point out that many of these instances are not associated with the Black Lives Matter movement; instead, many looters use the guise of protests to loot. As such, these actions should not detract from the main message of the large majority of peaceful protestors: systemic and legislative change is needed in order to police the police.

As such, we must create specific legislative changes in order to create sustainable change in our police force to mitigate—and, in the long run, dismantle—institutionalized oppression against people of color. Measures like reassigning police calls to services that can actually alleviate societal issues, ending qualified immunity, and increasing funding to the Independent Police Auditor office of San Jose are needed to fix our police force and City's system. We understand that change will be both difficult and costly, but we believe it is necessary.

Sincerely,

San Jose Youth Commission

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