



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PROMINENT SOUTH LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY AND LABOR LEADERS CALL FOR STATE OF EMERGENCY IN WAKE OF POLICE SHOOTINGS

LOS ANGELES—October 6, 2016: Prominent South Los Angeles community and labor leaders are calling for a state of emergency in Los Angeles and are urging Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council to act with urgency to hold LAPD accountable and address the disproportionate use of lethal force against Black and Latino residents.

The open letter follows below:

We, the undersigned, declare a state of emergency in the wake of police shootings in South Los Angeles, and call upon our city leaders to act with urgency to address the disproportionate use of lethal force against Black and Latino residents.

Problem

According to the Guardian, in 2015 the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) killed more people than any other law enforcement agency in the country. This year alone, there have been 18 killings of residents at the hands of law enforcement in Los Angeles. Time and time again, we see law enforcement exercise restraint when confronting white suspects, while not exercising the same care to avoid the loss of Black life. When confronting armed and unarmed suspects, officers should use a variety of de-escalation tactics to prevent further loss of life.

The lack of transparency in the investigations of officer involved killings and the repeated determinations by LAPD that these killings are justified only fuels suspicion and mistrust. According to a recent poll of 195 South LA residents conducted by Community Coalition:

- 69% of respondents say their confidence in the LAPD has decreased over the last three years.
- 75% believe officers should avoid using deadly force, even if the suspect is armed.
- 90% agree/believe the names of the officers involved in police shootings should be released to the public.

These results only substantiate our urgency for action.

Demand for Immediate Action

Without comprehensive and immediate action, the city's leadership is at risk of losing the trust, confidence, and support of the community. We are gravely disappointed that residents continue to call for greater police accountability 25 years after the civil unrest in South Los Angeles. We collectively call upon Mayor Eric Garcetti and the Los Angeles City Council to act with urgency to hold the LAPD accountable and address the disproportionate use of lethal force against Black and Latino residents in the following ways:

1. Open, Transparent and Independent Investigation into the Recent South L.A. Fatal Shootings

The recent release of the security video leading up to the fatal shooting of Carnell Snell Jr. is not conclusive of whether the shooting is justified. The community remains unclear on whether officers exhausted all available options to apprehend Carnell Snell Jr. before using deadly force. The public is missing similar details, including the name of an unidentified Latino male victim who was killed by an officer near East 45th St. and Ascot Avenue on October 2, 2016. We call upon the LAPD to immediately release the footage of the shooting so that the victim can be identified, the names of police involved in both shootings, any history of misconduct committed by those officers, and all witness statements.

2. Make Los Angeles Police Commission Accessible to the Public

The Los Angeles Police Commission should provide a space for everyday residents to inform police practices. Several community leaders and concerned residents reported they were barred from participating in the Los Angeles Police Commission meeting where Chief Beck released the video footage of Carnell Snell Jr. allegedly running from police. There is strong public concern over the recent shootings. As a means to increase community participation, we call upon the Los Angeles Police Commission to permanently hold meetings in the community, rather than at LAPD headquarters.

3. Decriminalize Peaceful Protest

Angelenos and the global community are outraged about the killing of residents at the hands of the police. Many have participated in organized and intuitive protest. Rather than recognizing protest as a hallmark of democracy, Los Angeles officials have criminalized protest by invoking penal codes that are meant to silence demonstrators, including the issuance of dispersal orders at public facilities and private property codes. Since the start of the Black Lives Matter era in 2013, Los Angeles has carried the dubious distinction of arresting and prosecuting more people for protest-related charges than any other city. We call for the immediate end to arrests and prosecutions of protestors and the dropping of all charges against individuals who have been arrested in the process of protest or other forms of civic engagement.

Organized, resident-led efforts rebuilt South Los Angeles after the 1992 civil unrest and those efforts continue to advance reforms that benefit all Angelenos. While the aforementioned demands will help alleviate growing

tensions between residents and law enforcement, we believe it is imperative that Los Angeles adopts systemic reforms that eradicate officer-involved killings and police misconduct.

The Undersigned,

Community Coalition

Black Lives Matter- LA

Strategic Concepts in Organizing & Policy Education (SCOPE)

Los Angeles Community Action Network

Brotherhood Crusade

Los Angeles Black Worker Center

Dignity and Power Now

Children's Defense Fund California

Advancement Project California

SEIU 721

SEIU 2015