



Unity Group of Chattanooga

For Immediate Release:

July 20th, 2019

Cc: Resolution on Banning Racial Profiling and the Excessive Use of Force

Whereas, on Friday July 12th 2019, video footage surfaced which displayed an egregious incident performed by Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputies that is deemed by many in our community as being a blatant act of racial profiling, police brutality and excessive use of force; and

Whereas, many of the modern instances of racial profiling, police brutality and excessive use of force can be directly attributed to Jim Crow era practices such as vagrancy, peonage and convict leasing; and

Whereas, in the 1998 report , "Shielded from Justice Police Brutality and Accountability in the United States", Human Rights Watch described excessive use of force incidents as occasions when, "Police officers engage in unjustified shootings, severe beatings, fatal chokings, and unnecessarily rough physical treatment in cities throughout the United States, while their police superiors, city officials, and the Justice Department fail to act decisively to restrain or penalize such acts or even to record the full magnitude of the problem"; and

Whereas, racial profiling, a primary factor which often leads to more detrimental instances of law enforcement abuse and misconduct, refers to pervasive and discriminatory practices by law enforcement officers that inordinately targets persons based on race, ethnicity, cultural beliefs or national origin; and

Whereas, in March 2019, the Stanford Computational Policy Lab found that after reviewing nearly 100 million traffic stops carried out by 21 state patrol agencies and 29 municipal police departments over almost a decade that, "Relative to their share of the residential population, we find that black drivers are, on average, stopped more often than whites"; and

Whereas, broken windows, zero-tolerance and other counteractive law enforcement strategies such as racial profiling and "Stop and Frisk" have been proven to be ineffective and inadequate because they have led to discriminatory targeting and overly aggressive encounters for minor infractions; led to the violation of constitutional rights such as the 4th Amendment protection against unreasonable search and seizures and the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection under the law clause; and have led to unfortunate instances of misconduct, police brutality and the excessive use of force; and

Therefore be it resolved, we call for a ban on adverse law enforcement policies and procedures which includes racial profiling, stop and frisk, excessive force, arrests without provocation, and any act that disregards and deprives individuals of their civil liberties and constitutional rights; and

Therefore be it resolved, law enforcement should be trained to de-escalate interactions by communicating with subjects, maintaining space and distance when it is reasonable, and being provided updated standards, policy and procedural manuals which includes the use of force matrix and evidence-based best practices that are employed by other jurisdictions; and

Be it resolved, officers should receive culturally competent, diversity, and mental health awareness training that serves to limit the likelihood that incidents that are bias-based and force aggressive will occur; and

Be it resolved, we call for systematized data collection protocols on racial profiling and the use of force to be developed, and that this information may be made readily available to the public on an annual basis; and

Further, we call for the full and immediate termination of the officers involved in this incident; and

Further, we call on the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division to begin a "Pattern or Practice" investigation into the Hamilton County Sheriff's Department, in order to review if members of the department engage in the use of excessive force; conduct unlawful searches, seizures and arrests; engage in discriminatory policing; and to document any apparent violations of the Constitution or federal law, and any instance which may have deprived citizens of their rights granted under the 4th Amendment, which protects against unreasonable searches and seizures; the 8th Amendment, which protects against Cruel and Unusual Punishment, both during law enforcement interactions with subjects and during incarceration at the Hamilton County jail; and the 14th Amendment which guarantees Equal Protection under the law; and to initiate collaborative reform if necessary; and

Further, we call on the United States Congress to pass the End Racial Profiling Act, which would help to curtail many of the insidious occurrences that are caused by racial profiling and the excessive use of force; and

Finally, we recognize the special and vitally important role law enforcement officials have in protecting, serving, and maintaining the public welfare. We greatly thank and appreciate them. It is for this reason that we would hope that our law enforcement departments, in order for them to be the most effective, are respectful and responsive through displaying the utmost professionalism and integrity to all citizens, and that they are trained in culturally relevant and constitutionally sound practices and procedures that would better assist them in interacting with the public and further garnering community trust, in the hopes that this will help to eliminate unfortunate instances such as racial profiling and the excessive use of force from being an ongoing and common occurrence.

Unity Group of Chattanooga,
Sherman E Matthews Jr. Chairman