FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2020

**RICHMOND COMMONWEALTH’S ATTORNEY’S OFFICE TO**

**RELEASE NAMES OF POLICE OFFICERS**

Since 2016, the Richmond Police Department has referred 53 officers to the Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office for the Office to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to establish that a crime had been committed by the officer. Thirty-three of those 53 referrals were reviewed to determine whether there was an excessive use of force. Officers were determined to have acted without excessive force in 17 of the 33 referrals. Eleven of the remaining 16 cases did not go forward due to either a lack of cooperation by the complainant or insufficient evidence of criminal intent, or both. One of the 16 referrals involved cross-warrants and both parties declined to proceed against each other. After independent investigation by a prosecutor and former Assistant Attorney General, there was sufficient evidence to present four cases based upon the use of excessive force to the Richmond Grand Jury. The Richmond Grand Jury found a lack of probable cause in two of those cases. Of the two remaining cases, one was nolle prossed in June 2020 when the complainant failed to appear in court and the other is set for a trial in August 2020.

The Richmond community wants to be assured that law enforcement officers do not receive special treatment and that our Office and the criminal justice system will treat non-officers and officers equally. I understand the impact of a criminal charge on any individual’s family, job, education and life, and so this Office does not release the names of either civilians or officers who are merely the subject of a criminal investigation where that investigation does not result in a criminal charge.

While it has never been this Office’s policy to apply a double-standard to the actions of police officers, some members of our Richmond community believe that a badge sometimes acts as a shield against equal justice under the law. This idea undermines the credibility and legitimacy of our justice system, which rests upon the principle of equal treatment of all persons before the law. Therefore, the twin goals of transparency and accountability to the public lead me to announce a new policy. Going forward, the Richmond Commonwealth’s Attorney’s Office will release the names of those officers indicted by the Richmond Grand Jury for a crime based upon either an abuse of authority while in the performance of their duties or based upon an excessive use of force while in the performance of their duties.