

Police and Minority Relations Committee Statement on Race and Policing

The sanctity of human life must be a guiding principle in our Law Enforcement agencies. Police work is a proud and noble profession, a privilege given to officers to serve and protect all of our fellow citizens, to be willing to sacrifice their safety to protect others, and to treat all they encounter with impartiality and respect.

As we mourn the loss of George Floyd, Jacob Blake, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice and many others too numerous to mention, let us come together and continue to communicate so that we continue the fight against racial injustice and make all of our communities safe for all people. Police officers take an oath to serve and protect all of our citizens, and to never discriminate based on a person's race, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. When the conduct of police officers fails to follow these tenets it is inexcusable, and in all cases those who commit injustices need to be held accountable.

Police brutality whenever and wherever it occurs erodes the trust the community has for the institution that they rightfully expect to protect them. It tears apart communities, as we have witnessed in Minneapolis, Baltimore and in other cities around our nation. The unlawful actions adversely affect all officers in their respective agencies and diminish the public trust of police in our communities. In order for the Criminal Justice System to work for all of us our Justice System must depend on equal treatment and investigations based on evidence, not stereotypes or bias.

We call upon all law enforcement to commit to a comprehensive officer selection process, on-going Use-of-Force and De-Escalation training, strict professional standards and citizens' complaint processes, Fair and Impartial Policing training, Accreditation, Crisis Intervention and various other training programs focused on the delivery of professional police services.

Trust must be built before it can be tested. The PMRC includes both members from the minority community and representatives from the Lower Merion Township Police Department. For over 30 years we have worked as a unit committed to promoting strong communication, developing trust, and ensuring accountability. The PMRC reaffirms its mission to represent a bridge between our community and the police department, and to serve as an intermediary or liaison for those needing support or assistance in their interactions with our local police. Together we are stronger.