

September 24, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: ALL AMERICAN CITIZENS

FROM: CHIEF DIANA TRUEBA VEGA
Director of Federal Bureau of Investigation

SUBJECT: LAW ENFORCEMENT & RACE RELATIONS

The untimely-televised death of George Floyd sent shockwaves through the hearts of all American people. Every law enforcement officer who watched the video of Floyd's arrest and death knew Chauvin's actions and the actions of the other three officers were not representative of their actions and the actions of thousands of other honest and ethical law enforcement officers nationwide. The actions of the law enforcement officers involved in Floyd's arrest were unprofessional and cast a negative light on all of law enforcement. Every mother in the nation felt Floyd was calling out to her when Floyd called out for his mom as he laid on the ground taking his last breaths. Every adult and young man of color could relate to Floyd and realized he could have easily found himself in Floyd's situation. Floyd's death has outraged our entire nation, and it has sent demands throughout the nation for police accountability and reform. It is evident our nation is at a crossroads, and action is needed to not only bring resolution to George Floyd's death, but to make procedural and societal changes to prevent similar incidents in the future.

After firing all four involved officers in George Floyd's death, Minneapolis Police Chief Medaria Arrandondo gave a speech. In his speech, Arrandondo said, *"public trust continues, and it must be the cornerstone of how the Minneapolis Police Department is going to build that trust and change our culture."* Police legitimacy is impossible without public trust, and public trust is indeed the cornerstone of how law enforcement agencies nationwide build healthy relationships with the public they serve. Public trust is and must continue to be the primary focus of all law enforcement agencies. Trust in any relationship is built on mutual respect, honest communication, and collaboration. Both parties in the relationship must be willing to be active participants in order for the relationship to thrive. In our current situation, we find that the relationship between law enforcement and the community has been badly fractured. Rebuilding trust will take a lot of work on both sides. Many difficult conversations must take place, and the rebuilding of trust will require a lot of mutual

respect, honest communication, and collaboration. The hard work needed by both the community and the law enforcement agencies will be worthy of the end result: having a cohesive community.

In 2015, Former FBI Director James Comey gave a speech regarding law enforcement and race relations. In the speech, Comey mentioned the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve is a complicated one. All relationships take work, and the most complicated ones can also be the most fulfilling ones. Comey's speech also mentioned we could live our lives, hoping someone else will work on resolving the conflict between law enforcement and the communities they serve. We could also choose to roll up our sleeves, have a candid and honest discussion about our current situation, as well as identify the work we need to do to move our relationship forward and mend what is broken. I believe the relationship between our law enforcement and our communities will take a lot of work on both sides to mend, but the work will be very fulfilling to both sides in the end.

Communities need to see law enforcement officers as people; husbands, wives, mothers, fathers, and members of the community. Conversely, it is important for law enforcement officers to see community members as people as well: people with hopes, dreams, and rights. When we all focus on our similarities and things that connect us, we can start to understand each other better, and we are more willing to listen to each other.

Focusing on our similarities increases the trust and bridges the gap between our communities and law enforcement. After all, we are all part of the same community. The only thing that separates officers from community members is officers wear a uniform while they serve the public. When officers wear the uniform, they need to realize they represent every single other law enforcement officer in the country, and their actions or inactions will reflect on how the community perceives law enforcement. Conversely, when watching the news, community members must be cognizant that the George Floyd incident is not representative of the majority of men and women in law enforcement. Again, being open to seeing the world through each other's eyes, will help to gain a better understanding of the other parties' perspectives, as well as increase public trust and increase police legitimacy.

While it is important to identify and focus on similarities, it is also important to realize our differences. We all come from different backgrounds and upbringings. Not all police officers come from the same background; not all community members have the same upbringing. Our different upbringings have provided differing and various unconscious biases, including racial biases. It is imperative we work on identifying our biases and be proactive with our actions, so our unconscious biases do not affect our outward actions towards each other. The more we can identify our own biases and understand each other's', the more we can work around those biases and move forward towards a cohesive and peaceful future.

The current situation involving four officers and the death of George Floyd has cast a negative shadow over all of law enforcement officers in our nation and increased demands for police reform and accountability. We must work collectively to find a long-term solution in police reform and accountability while also focusing on the safety of our law enforcement officers that put their lives on the line every day. A large majority of officers have voiced serious concerns about their physical safety while they are carrying out their duties. In a survey taken by the Pew Research Center, 42% of officers say they “*nearly always or often have serious concerns about their safety.*” Two recent ambush attacks confirm law enforcement officers face inherent dangers while protecting their communities. The ambush that killed five Dallas Police officers in 2016 and the more recent ambush-style attack that left two Los Angeles Sheriff Deputies critically injured in September 2020 are only two examples of how officers endanger themselves daily for their communities.

Law Enforcement officers go to work understanding they are inherently engendering their lives. While 83% of American adults surveyed stated they understand the risk law enforcement officers face on the job, 86% of the officers surveyed expressed they believed the public does not understand the risk law enforcement officer’s face on the job. It is inherently important for law enforcement officers and community members to communicate openly with each other, express empathy for each other, and attempt to see life from each other’s perspective.

The unprofessional actions of the officers involved in the recent arrest and death of George Floyd have resurfaced the critical importance public trust has on building relationships between law enforcement and the community they serve. While the relationship between law enforcement and the community has always been a complicated one, and it requires a lot of work, the work to keep the relationship healthy must be done by people from both sides of the table. It is important we identify our differences and similarities and focus on our similarities to understand each other better.

Law Enforcement officers and citizens in the communities they serve must take equal responsibility for seeing each other as people, listening to each other, and working together to find collective solutions that will bring accountability and peace into our future. I urge us all to take an active part in changing our culture, and changing our future and the future of our children.

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