

Police District Council 011 wishes to extend our deepest condolences to the family of Dexter Antonio Reed Jr who died last month after an encounter with Police ended in an exchange of gunfire. We mourn with the family, as we witness yet another tragic loss of life—the latest in a long list of tragedies in this country concerning the police, people of color, and incidents characterized by excessive violence. In the time following the release of the videos documenting the last moments of his life, many of us will be angry and justifiably so. We urge restraint and control. When emotions are high, we often retreat to our respective communities so that we can safely assign blame without challenge. We all must lick our wounds, however, and realize that these excessively violent events are part of a pattern that is bigger than us and our anger.

We say this as Black members of this Police District Council who have known the fear of flashing red and blue lights in the rear-view mirror. We say this as Black members of a community where one of us was in handcuffs for a “routine traffic stop” in the driveway of their own home. We say this as Black members of a community who have each witnessed the grisly aftermath of different neighborhood shootouts, the last as recently as Juneteenth. We say this as Black residents who have neighbors who are afraid to come outside for fear of being assaulted (again) or shot (again) on their own front porches.

As Black members of this Police District Council who are just as sad and frustrated as any of you, we as a community must understand the structural forces that urge individuals to these circumstances, and we must annihilate those circumstances while preserving the humanity of those who are central to each encounter. This means we must seek to understand the systems that urge a 26-year-old former high school basketball player to carry a firearm for protection. That starts with discussions on class and poverty and how poverty correlates with violence. We must also understand how policing as an institution was born out of attempts to preserve property in lieu of justice and how the consent decree can serve as a way to meaningfully transition the police away from a largely reactive institution to one characterized by strong ties to the community.

Some believe the young man is responsible for his own death while others will place all the blame on the police. From the comfort of one’s home in another part of town where these events rarely happen, it is very easy to do so. For those who live in the communities where these events happen, the answers are complicated and real and the failure to meaningfully solve these problems results in real tragedy. It is the role of the CCPSA and the Police District Councils to turn discussion and rhetoric into actionable policy. We invite you to help foster the growth of our community with us.

We call on **all members** of the community to join us at our next Police District Council community meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024 at Legler Regional Library.