

Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Use of "Non-Lethal" Force Continues to be Deadly for County Residents

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Los Angeles, C.A. – Earlier this week 26-year-old Brian Pickett died after being tased by a deputy of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. Our condolences go out to the mother of Brian Pickett who has lost a son in a law enforcement interaction that she had to bear witness to. This is yet another reminder that protecting the lives and human rights of our communities is not simply a question of "lethal" force. The death of Eric Garner in Staten Island reminds us that non-lethal force often results in the death of Black and Brown community members. Furthermore, the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department has a long history of excessive force, oftentimes while applying "non-lethal" methods.

Dignity and Power Now recently achieved a major victory of moving the county to implement an independent civilian oversight commission. A legally empowered, community rooted oversight commission is necessary to ensure that the wrongful death and abuse of Black and Brown communities by the Sheriff's Department be thoroughly investigated and reviewed. The pattern of law enforcement interactions resulting in the loss of a life must be interrupted. Dignity and Power Now believes the county's oversight commission must 1) have subpoena power, 2) have its own legal counsel, 3) be made up of 9 people, 5 appointed by the county Supervisors and 4 appointed from a pool of community members, 4) be comprised of no current or former law enforcement, and 5) direct the functions of the Inspector General.

We look forward to working with the county supervisors and the oversight commission working group. Together they have been appointed to ensure that the commission is thoroughly empowered to function as a deterrent against any future community interactions with LASD personnel – interactions that may result in the death or brutal treatment of our loved ones in our neighborhoods or in the county jail system.

For more information, please visit dignityandpowernow.org.