

Coalition Appeals to New Sheriff's Oversight Commission to Reject Trump's Policies

For Immediate Release: January 25th, 2017

Contact: Mark-Anthony Johnson (818) 259-1322

Spanish Media Liaison: Guadalupe Chavez (323) 979-6550

Press Conference: Thursday, January 26th, 2017, Bob Hope Patriotic Hall, 1816 S Figueroa, 9:00 AM

3655 S. Grand Ave.
Suite 240
Los Angeles, CA
90003

(213) 745-7135

dignityandpowernow.org

Los Angeles, C.A. – The Coalition to End Sheriff Violence (C2ESV) – a coalition made up of 20 Los Angeles based social justice organizations including Dignity and Power Now and the ACLU of Southern California – have penned a letter to the nine civilian oversight commissioners whose task of overseeing the nation's largest sheriff's department and second most deadly police force starts this Thursday at 9:30 AM when they meet publicly for the first time.

Just as President Trump has publicly promised to “end the dangerous anti-police atmosphere in America” the C2ESV has stressed that it is critical that the commission remains committed to holding the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department accountable and making their operations transparent to the public. In 2016 there were 89 reported police shootings in LA County – or 1 every 4 days – according to a report recently released by the L.A. District Attorney's Office. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department fatally shot a reported 16 people last year, many of whom were unarmed. In addition, the Sheriff's Department shot more unarmed Black people than LAPD and both departments kill Black Angelenos at a much higher rate than other races. Recent data published by the Sheriff's Department shows that 12 shootings were ruled out of policy in 2016, however, in none of these cases was use of force found out of policy, only use of *tactics*.

Health and Wellness Director at Dignity and Power Now Mark-Anthony Johnson states in the letter, “Our communities are deeply concerned with distinctions that validate lethal force and/or excessive force while offering no transparency to the public regarding what tactics are being deemed out of policy.”

The appeal includes a list of priorities including **full public accessibility of the Civilian Oversight Commission in its structure, meeting location, times, and culture, ending LASD shootings, specifically of Black and Brown people, ending medical negligence in the county jail, the Commission gaining control the currently ineffective complaint process, ending the use of degrading strip searches at CRDF, ensuring the safety of incarcerated LGBTQ people and that their full rights –including access to religious services – are protected, ending LASD cooperation with ICE, and ending LASD's controversial new use of drones.**

Trump has recently come out threatening to strike federal funding to sanctuary cities only days after Sheriff McDonnell wrote a column detailing his commitment that his “deputies will not detain or arrest any individual solely on suspicion of illegal presence in the United States.” The Sheriff will be in attendance and making a presentation at the upcoming Commission meeting.

The Coalition letter ends with both a congratulation and a plea, “We congratulate you on your new positions and wish you the best in making this commission the most effective in the nation. We hope that you will serve as an example to the rest of the country during this challenging time of state perpetuated fear, prison expansion, police militarization, and attack on our fundamental rights. **Will you stand with us in ending sheriff violence against Black and Brown people, LGBTQ people, women, and all of our loved ones who are affected by the policies and practices of the department?**”

Coalition members will hold a press conference at 9 AM ahead of the inaugural Commission meeting.