



JEWISH COMMUNITY RELATIONS COUNCIL
of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties

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Contact: Jeremy Russell
Communications Manager
415/977-7417
jrussell@jcrc.org

JCRC Expresses Deep Concern About Racism in Law Enforcement

San Francisco, CA – In Ferguson, Baltimore and other American cities, protests and rioting have erupted over incidences in which unarmed African American men and women have been assaulted, and in some cases killed, by law enforcement officials. The Jewish Community Relations Council is greatly dismayed by these recent tragedies and the continued racial divide within our society. The vast majority of protests in response to these incidents have been peaceful, and we join them in their calls for justice. At the same time, we condemn those who took advantage of these protests to loot, attack law enforcement or others, cause destruction of property, and act out in violence.

JCRC greatly values our long-standing relationship with law enforcement. Our experience has been that the overwhelming majority of law enforcement officials are respectful and committed to protecting the safety and welfare of our communities. At the same time, we are deeply disturbed by the specter of systemic racial bias that persists across the nation.

Police officers are routinely called upon to make instantaneous decisions in highly stressful situations, and outcomes are best understood based on specific circumstances. However, we are concerned by what we see as a pattern of racism that affects some of the judgments that are made. All over the country, there are communities in turmoil over deep-seated racial issues. Addressing these serious issues is long overdue. The legacy of slavery and segregation continues to play out in our criminal justice system, and it is time now to come together as communities of conscience to join together with those who have been denied equal justice. We stand with the African American community, as we have for generations, in calling for an end to racial prejudice and discrimination. Changes need to be made in attitudes and practices across the board.

Against this backdrop of nationwide upheaval, the racist and homophobic content of recently disclosed text messages shared among a contingent of San Francisco police officers is profoundly disturbing and a powerful reminder that here too there is no immunity from racial prejudice. Recognizing that the values of Tikkun Olam, “repairing the world,” begin at home, we support local efforts to root out racism from the police force and improve relations between officers and the communities they serve. We support the ongoing inquiry to examine racial bias in the San Francisco Police Department, as well as disciplinary action against the officers who are found guilty. A just society depends upon a law enforcement system that is unbiased towards all.

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