



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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JOINT STATEMENT OF LEADING ADVOCACY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN SUPPORT OF NEW JERSEY ATTORNEY GENERAL’S DIRECTIVES REGARDING UNIFORM STATEWIDE PROCEDURES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR CONDUCTING POLICE USE-OF-FORCE INVESTIGATIONS AND BODY WORN CAMERAS

New Brunswick, New Jersey—Today, a coalition of leading civil rights, advocacy, and law enforcement organizations, including the New Jersey State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), New Jersey Institute for Social Justice (the “Institute”), National Action Network, New Jersey Black Issues Convention, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE), Rutgers University School of Criminal Justice, Integrated Justice Alliance and New Jersey Communities Forward, collectively support Attorney General John J. Hoffman’s announcement of important progress in the implementation of the directive regarding uniform statewide procedures and best practices for body worn cameras.

Today, the Attorney General announced that financial support has been provided to make more than 5,000 body worn cameras available to nearly 200 of New Jersey’s communities. The Attorney General’s commitment of these resources is an important step forward in providing the law enforcement accountability and transparency necessary to help strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve

Body worn cameras are an important part of a broader comprehensive strategy that will help enhance law enforcement effectiveness by increasing accountability transparency, healthy engagement, and ultimately trust between law enforcement and the communities officers serve.

Since the Attorney General first announced the policy in July, members of this coalition have served on the Body Worn Cameras advisory committee, working closely with Director Elie Honig, and have explored issues, challenges, and opportunities with the Attorney General’s leadership team. We look forward to continuing this important work together.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD T. SMITH, PRESIDENT OF NAACP NEW JERSEY STATE CONFERENCE:

Today’s announcement is an important step towards building a partnership between law enforcement and the communities they serve, and we hope it will encourage increased transparency and collaboration. We have been fortunate to build on partnerships with the Attorney General and with the NJ State Association of Chiefs of Police over the last year. For example, in recent months both the Attorney General and the head of the NJSACOP joined the NAACP in supporting implicit bias training for more than 130 chiefs, or their designees, from across the state and the chiefs welcome NAACP chapter presidents to the police academy so that they could experience use of force training first hand.

STATEMENT OF RYAN P. HAYGOOD, CEO AND PRESIDENT OF NEW JERSEY INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:

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We believe that law enforcement in New Jersey can and must be more than peacekeepers. They can join with the communities they serve to be peacemakers. Today's announcement providing financial resources for body worn cameras to New Jersey's communities helps give life to our vision of public safety as part of empowered and healthy communities. We look forward to working on broader reform efforts that include law enforcement de-escalation, racial bias and cultural competency training, comprehensive data collection, and increased accountability in response to police misconduct. We view this equipment purchase as a significant achievement and commend the Attorney General for his leadership on this new policy.

STATEMENT OF JAMES E. JOHNSON, FOUNGING MEMBER OF NEW JERSEY COMMUNITIES FORWARD AND CO-CHAIR OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON BODY WORN CAMERAS:

Today's announcement marks an important development and signals how vital it is that law enforcement and the communities they serve remain continually engaged. This announcement comes nearly a year to the day since more than 135 citizens from across the state gathered in Trenton to do something different: to talk to each other, learn from each other and develop concrete proposals for change. The Body Worn Cameras policy, strengthened today, was one of the first issues we raised and communities request. We have been heartened over the year, by the candor and transparency of discussions with the Attorney General. While we don't expect that law enforcement and the communities will agree on everything at all times, we do believe that it is essential that efforts like this continue to take place and we commend the Attorney General for his commitment to addressing these important issues.

STATEMENT OF PASTOR STEFFIE BARTLEY, NEW JERSEY CHAPTER PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK:

We welcome the continued engagement of the Attorney General on these challenging issues and we will continue to watch and learn as we go forward. It is our hope that, through these efforts, New Jersey can serve as a model for the nation. It is important that the citizens of our communities understand these reforms and I am encouraged by the efforts by the Attorney General and his team to continue to reach out to the public so they know more about the law enforcement reforms under way and have a meaningful opportunity for input.

STATEMENT OF REVA FOSTER, CHAIR OF NEW JERSEY BLACK ISSUES CONVENTION:

We commend the Attorney General for his willingness to consider various community perspectives in shaping policies that will move us forward. We are prepared to continue to engage on the issues that affect our communities on a daily basis.

STATEMENT OF JILES SHIP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF BLACK LAW ENFORCEMENT EXECUTIVES:

NOBLE has long been an advocate for body worn cameras as a way to ensure the integrity of the law enforcement process and to provide the community with confidence that they have a clear window into the actions of law enforcement officials. The purchase of 5000 BWC for law enforcement across the state puts NJ squarely in the lead on this important area of our overall reform efforts.

STATEMENT OF ANNA "CUQUI" RIVERA, ADMINISTRATIVE CHAIR, INTEGRATED JUSTICE ALLIANCE:

In the community interest of these new law enforcement policies and initiatives to progress safety and fairness to all communities in NJ, it is paramount to not only inform these very communities through dialogues and

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forums but to much further, include them in the very development of how this is being set up at the local level. Include representatives at the table itself as this is being structured, not just to listen but to be heard. This is an exceptional and historic moment we have to do this right from the beginning.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation's oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities.

The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice is a Newark-based urban research and advocacy organization dedicated to the advancement of New Jersey's urban areas and residents. Established in 1999 by the Alan V. and Amy Lowenstein Foundation, the Institute provides a dynamic and independent voice for change necessary to create just, vibrant, and inclusive urban communities throughout New Jersey.

National Action Network is one of the leading civil rights organizations in the Nation with chapters throughout the entire United States. Founded in 1991 by Reverend Al Sharpton, NAN works within the spirit and tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to promote a modern civil rights agenda that includes the fight for one standard of justice, decency and equal opportunities for all people regardless of race, religion, nationality or gender.

The New Jersey Black Issues Convention is an umbrella organization for groups that advocate on behalf of African-American communities. NJBIC seeks to establish a network of cooperation and communication among all Black organizations in New Jersey for the regular exchange of information year round.

The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) serves as the conscience of law enforcement by being committed to Justice by Action. NOBLE has nearly 60 chapters and represents over 4,000 members worldwide that represent chief executive officers and command-level law enforcement officials from federal, state, county, municipal law enforcement agencies, and criminal justice practitioners.

The Integrated Justice Alliance (IJA) is a solution-oriented collective of organizations who generate and support effective public policies before, during and after incarceration in New Jersey. IJA represents a broad coalition of expertise in criminal justice, community organizing, reentry, mental health and policy. IJA is directed by a steering committee consisting of over two-dozen volunteers from around the state under the guidance of NJISJ.

NJ Communities Forward is a non-partisan initiative created by concerned citizens to enhance safety and increase economic opportunity in New Jersey communities. This holistic approach seeks to build partnerships including dialogue between law enforcement and the communities in which they serve.