

# Declaration of Humanity

*Social Justice and Equality for All  
Citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia*

*Recognizing that the Declaration of Independence is a defining document for ALL American Citizens, this Declaration of Humanity respectfully borrows its language*

When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to examine the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the equal considerations to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to this declaration.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form or Branch of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter it and to institute new approaches to Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.

This Declaration of Humanity declares that the following actions must be taken by our government to secure just and reasonable treatment for people of color and others who have been oppressed by unfair considerations to Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness:

Regarding Public Institutions:

- Public places and institutions shall not be named in honor of Confederate generals or those who actively supported segregation or bigotry.
- Rename all public schools, schools receiving public assistance, sports mascots (school and otherwise), public places, and military installations that are named in honor of Confederate generals and those who actively supported segregation or bigotry.

Include in your Police Reform Policy:

- Mental Health evaluations:
  - Mandatory for all new hires
  - Mandatory for officers with founded use of force complaints
  - Mental health services offered to officers upon request or if the supervisor deems is necessary.
- Bring back Second Responders. Redirect funds to employ social service and mental health providers to work at the department to assist officers on calls where mental health issues are involved.
- Build a Crisis response team to do home visit follow ups on domestic violence reports that police respond to, working alongside organization such as Richmond Behavioral Health Authority.
- If a new hire applicant has been dismissed from another police department for disciplinary problems, they shall not be hired as a Richmond Police Officer. Include in your hiring practice to ask the question of the previous precinct they worked for "Would you rehire this person?"

- Have a fully staffed Internal Affairs Division with quick turnaround times on all complaints, no longer than 90 days for Chief’s review and decisions to be made.
- Have a Multiracial Citizens Review Board to make recommendations to the police with no less than 6 people.
- Quality Mandatory Training to include:
  - Firearm training twice a year.
  - Biannual Use of Force training
  - Annual De-escalating and Ethics training.
  - Annual Mental health training
- Bring back or increase Community policing in which police officers frequently work on foot, bicycle, or horseback to build relationships with community members.
- Have more frequent Command Staff walks or other community related activities where the community sees more than just the officers on the streets.
- For calls of violent offenses, no less than 4 officers should be deployed to the scene.
- For non-violent offenses where there are only 2 officers on the scene, if it is determined that an arrest is warranted and the suspect resists, the officers should immediately stop and call for backup before proceeding.
- For arrests related to first-time alcohol or drug-use, or related offenses including arrests for driving under the influence, that do not result in harm of other people or property, the suspect shall be given a summons to appear in court to determine whether substance abuse counseling is needed. The person arrested for this offense shall be allowed to contact another person who can drive them and their vehicle to another location.
- If a police officer observes other police officers violating the law without attempting to stop or correct the violation and reporting it to the supervisor, that officer will be culpable as well.
- All uniformed officers with regular contact with citizens must wear body cameras that must be turned on when they exit their vehicles.
- Supervisors will be responsible if employees do not follow the police code of conduct. Under failure to supervise, they shall be held accountable.
- When an officer stops or detains subjects, immediately tell them why they are being stopped or detained.
- Create a policy where officers have discretion to issue warning tickets for minor traffic offenses, recorded for the department but not issued to the DMV.

**We also show our support for City Council's four police reform papers:**

**ORD. 2020–155: Create a Civilian Review Board task force**

Sets up a task force to research and design an appropriate Civilian Review Board for Richmond. Nine folks, appointed by Council, will make up the task force—one must live in a public housing neighborhood, one must be 18-years-old or younger, and one must be a person with a disability. The task force will be responsible for everything from determining what’s legally allowed in Richmond and in Virginia, to collecting feedback from the community and key stakeholders, to outright creating the CRB’s bylaws and budget. The task force must complete this work by March 1st.

**RES. 2020-R045: Create a Marcus Alert work group**

Asks the Chief Officer to create a workgroup that will develop a plan to implement the Marcus Alert, a program that will coordinate emergency responders with the aim of deescalating “situations involving individuals with suspected or confirmed mental health issues.” This workgroup will consist of folks from the

Richmond Police Department, Department of Social Services, Department of Emergency Communications, and a member of City Council—but no members of the community! The workgroup can, if they wish, also bring in mental health professionals, like those from the Richmond Behavioral Health Authority. The plan this group generates must be delivered to Council by October 1st, 2020 and can include all sorts of things but must consider: coordination with in-patient and out-patient mental health facilities, training for City employees, and funding. I’m interested in how much community members—including the Marcus-David Peters family—have been/will be involved in this process.

**RES. 2020-R047: Do a report on (some) of the RPD’s budget**

Asks the Chief Administrative Officer to report to Council all of the funding in the FY2021 budget that the Richmond Police Department will use for “mental health, substance abuse, and social service functions” and to provide recommendations on how to reallocate that funding to either other City departments or community organizations. The background section of the resolution helpfully notes that “Such calls for reallocation of police resources have come to be grouped under the rubric of ‘Defund the police’”, and that “‘Defund’ does not mean abolish policing.” This report will not look into how to defund the regular, day-to-day parts of the RPD budget, but, I reckon that will be a focus of September’s budget review meeting.

**RES. 2020-R046: Request a recurring asset forfeiture report**

Asks the Chief Administrative Officer to give the Finance and Economic Development committee quarterly reports on five asset forfeiture special funds: The Commonwealth Attorney Federal/State Asset Forfeiture Special Funds, the Police Federal/State Asset Forfeiture Special Funds, and the Sheriff and Jail State Asset Forfeiture Special Fund. Those funds total \$882,366 in the proposed FY21 city budget (\$2,366; \$75,000; \$300,000; \$500,000; and \$5,000 respectively). With regular reports, Council hopes to increase the transparency on the collection and use of these assets.

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Agencies and Representatives of our State Government have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We, therefore, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of the Commonwealth of Virginia, solemnly publish and declare, that we will not stop our protests until the demands of our Declaration of Humanity have been satisfactorily addressed.

And in support of this Declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our sacred Honor.

Signatures will be accepted by hand and by email to include each person’s name, telephone number, city, and the person’s age if he/she is under the age of 25. If the person’s email address is provided, he/she will be kept abreast regarding the delivery and receipt of this document, and regarding actions taken in response.