

RESOLUTION NO.

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY  
OF SANTA BARBARA DECLARING RACISM AS A  
PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND CONDEMNING  
POLICE BRUTALITY

WHEREAS, we are haunted by the searing vision of a Minneapolis police officer kneeling on a subdued man's neck, as other officers witnessed Mr. George Floyd's pleas for help be ignored by the very people who are trained to help and assist; and

WHEREAS, from slavery to Jim Crow laws to the modern criminal justice system, black people in this country have been brutalized and dehumanized for centuries, including Santa Barbara County's first black enslaved resident, Jerry Forney; and

WHEREAS, on March 28, 2015, 26-year-old and Oxnard, California resident Meagan Hockaday was fatally shot in her own home by Oxnard Police; and

WHEREAS, on February 23, 2020, America witnessed the shooting and killing of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed black man going for a jog, by two white men in Glynn County, Georgia; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, 26-year-old emergency medical worker Breonna Taylor was shot and killed by police inside her home after a "no-knock" raid; and

WHEREAS, on May 6, 2020, 21-year-old, Sean Reed was fatally shot by Indianapolis Police; and

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2020, 38-year-old, Tony McDade was fatally shot by Tallahassee Police, and

WHEREAS, we are haunted, too, by the knowledge that these are not isolated events in our country. The number of names and similar experiences is unconscionably long, and an undeniable part of the history of this nation; and

WHEREAS, we extend our condolences to Mr. Floyd's family and friends and to all who grieve his death. We offer our thoughts to the countless members of our community who have been personally impacted as well; and

WHEREAS, we condemn the actions of the police officers involved; and

WHEREAS, we strive to remain ever thoughtful in our work – as public officials – to ensure that all members of our community feel part of Santa Barbara and feel protected, listened to, and served by their public servants; and

WHEREAS, as public officials, it is our duty to use our legal and moral authority to protect all members of our community no matter their race or color or where they fall on the power spectrum. It is our duty to foster a community free of fear, intimidation and violence – a community in which people are not targeted or hurt unnecessarily by law enforcement – and to provide equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, we know many of the young people in our community have seen this video and other similar news, and are trying to process these traumatizing events with their families. However, the current public health situation makes it that much more difficult as they are unable to connect with friends, extended family, or school staff; and

WHEREAS, the struggles of black people have been highlighted most recently by alarming findings that black Americans are dying from Covid-19 at a much higher rate compared to white Americans due to systemic, structural racism; and

WHEREAS, marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and those with disabilities, are also more likely to be subjected to unjust treatment by law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the recent acts of racism have sparked advocacy, activism, and protests across the Country with groups such as Black Lives Matter demanding action be taken to end this violence; and

WHEREAS, multiple protests have been independently led by students and adults, showing the powerful nature of an activated community that wants to do better and confront all bias and anti-blackness; and

WHEREAS, in alignment with the goal of creating a safe and welcoming community, we value human rights, peace, respect, inclusivity, and equity, and recognize that we derive strength from our diversity.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Santa Barbara City Council denounces in the strongest possible terms the actions and inactions by these police officers that resulted in Mr. Floyd's death and to do our part to ensure that this does not happen in the City of Santa Barbara by taking the following actions:

1. To urge the Santa Barbara Police Department to continue to commit to fair and impartial policing policies, continue to develop and implement comprehensive programs to ensure equitable justice policing practices at all levels of the agency; and
2. Direct the City Attorney's Office to return on July 21, 2020, with a City Council presentation on options for establishing an independent civilian police oversight system; and

3. To declare racism as a public health crisis; and
4. To condemn any and all police brutality.