

PUBLIC STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF CHIEF KEITH HUMPHREY

We, the undersigned, represent multiple generations of Little Rock city leaders in governance, education, religion, community activism, business and law. We have spent much of our personal and professional lives endeavoring to advance the best interests of Little Rock. While we are steadfast in our deep love of Little Rock, we are nonetheless cognizant of its historical struggles surrounding the question of race. We proudly bear the collective scars of these battles, all the while trying to push our City toward a more perfect union. Entrenched forces inevitably marshal to resist the societal progress Little Rock seeks—they wish to return us to a time when a powerful majority imposed its self-advancing will on an oppressed minority, constitutional rights notwithstanding. When this happens, it is our duty to speak out.

We, therefore, find it imperative to speak out today in support of Chief Keith Humphrey of the Little Rock Police Department. We do this because it is imperative to speak out in support of fair treatment and to further dismantle the age-old vestiges of institutional racism, such as those deeply embedded in police departments. We find it imperative to speak out now in support of autonomy for black professionals commensurate with that of their white counterparts. **In short, we believe that to speak out in support of Chief Humphrey today is to advance the best interests of the City because defending his autonomy and safeguarding the reform measures he has instituted—ones which protect civil rights and demand reasonable officer accountability—are clearly in the best interest of Little Rock.**

Most of us remember well the insurrection against Chief Lawrence Johnson—Little Rock’s first black police chief—twenty years ago. We recall his efforts to level an egregiously uneven playing field, not so that black officers enjoy any undue advantage over their white brothers and sisters, but merely to obtain some modicum of equality in the workplace. We recollect his community outreach and his push for officer accountability. Yet, his much-needed reform agenda was canceled by certain institutional powers that viewed it as a threat to their oversized clout. So, we speak out now because history in Little Rock sadly repeats itself, while we all watch. Indeed, we have seen this movie before.

History tells us we must speak out now, because the insidious smear campaign against Chief Humphrey too closely resembles the organized assault on the professional reputation of Chief Johnson. Unverified, slanderous falsehoods about Chief Humphrey litter the internet, social media and other outlets. There is no legitimate purpose for these false attacks. And when one views the objective facts, the overwhelming conclusion is that Chief Humphrey—like Chief Johnson before him—simply is the victim of a coordinated attack on his reform agenda. This attack is waged, ultimately, to force him out of office. Here are some of the established facts as we understand them:

- Consistent with his successful mayoral campaign, Mayor Frank Scott appointed Chief Humphrey chief of LRPD largely because of his proven commitment to police reform measures—like 21st Century Policing—and his track record of implementing them;
- Since his appointment, Chief Humphrey has modified and created policies which reflect the reform measures he was appointed to implement, such as: 1) creation of a citizen review board; 2) anti-nepotism provision; 3) reducing dangerous “no knock” warrants; and 4) banning chokeholds;
- As chief of police, Chief Humphrey was entirely within his authority to terminate Charles Starks for his involvement in a 2019 officer-involved shooting, just as former chief, Stuart Thomas, who is white, was within his authority when he terminated Josh Hastings for a 2012 shooting which was also in violation of LRPD policy;

- Nonetheless, certain institutional powers have waged against Chief Humphrey a concerted smear campaign in the media, in the courts and among his rank-and-file officers in an attempt to defeat the reform measures he is implementing, ones for which Little Rock citizens decisively voted in December 2018;
- Certain subordinate officers sent soliciting text messages to female officer co-workers in an attempt to persuade them to level false accusations of sexual harassment against Chief Humphrey (these text messages are a matter of public record);
- Through their private counsel, other subordinate officers sent a threatening email to the City Attorney's Office wherein it was said to the City Attorney *"for what it's worth, the University of Oklahoma Police Chief position is open. I believe all the evidence I have presented would disqualify [Chief Humphrey] for that position, but from the standpoint of cutting off further liability [for the City], it would sure seem to be easier if he left to go there in my view."*;
- Certain subordinate officers have filed lawsuits against Chief Humphrey which, in the words of the City Attorney, *"suggest the real goal is not to remedy an employment relationship but to terminate the Police Chief,"* which constitutes *"attempts to use the courts to accomplish a political end"* driven by *"considerable cooperation between"* certain subordinate officers;
- The City Attorney's Office determined that a high-ranking officer who is suing Chief Humphrey used the City-issued computer of another high-ranking officer who also is suing him to download leaked video footage in support of a false story about Chief Humphrey having an extramarital affair; and
- Chief Humphrey and his wife have been the victim of a relentless onslaught of racially tinged harassment in the form of unwanted personal encounters, electronic harassment and other threats.

In closing, when Chief Humphrey left the Norman Police Department prior to his appointment here, one of his colleagues said of him:

"I value all that I have learned working directly with Chief Humphrey on a daily basis. His leadership encourages personal growth and development, and I value the many lessons learned and mentorship I have experienced over the last three years of being in this role. He values the opinion and expertise of his team."

This sentiment is consistent with what we have come to know of Chief Humphrey, and we support him because we believe race and resistance to much-needed reform lie at the heart of the allegations hurled at him. However, perhaps more importantly, **we also support Chief Humphrey because, as duly appointed chief of police, it is entirely within his authority and discretion to terminate officers whom he believes have violated policy, to implement reform measures and to demand officer accountability, among other things.** Chief Humphrey is merely implementing changes that Little Rock voters demanded with their December 2018 ballots. He should be allowed to implement his vision at the LRPD as he sees fit. Any undue pressure to force him to resign or step down—especially without full knowledge of the facts—is a reckless encroachment which severely undermines and endangers the established, para-military command structure within the LRPD. There is one chief of police. Please let this chief do his job.

Sincerely, we the undersigned:

<u>/s/ Mr. Roddrick Aldridge</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Jeremy Allen</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Major Banks Jr.</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Joshua Andrew</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Paul Baxter, Esq.</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Marvin Benton</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Lloyd W. Black</u>	<u>/s/ Dr. Dexter Booth</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Broadway Joe</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Derick D. Brooks</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Paul Brown</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Vera Brownlee</u>
<u>s/ Mr. Eric Buchanan, Esq.</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Angela Burt</u>	<u>/s/ Brother Wayne Burt</u>
<u>/s/ Ms. Suzette Cannon</u>	<u>/s/ Rev. Dr. Preston Clegg</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Dianne Curry (LR-NAACP)</u>
<u>/s/ Rev. Dr. Kevin Daley</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Edmond Davis</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Henry Droughter</u>
<u>/s/ Pastor Derick Easter</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Khayyam Eddings, Esq.</u>	<u>/s/ Rev. Dr. C. Dennis Edwards</u>
<u>/s/ Ms. Donna C. Ellison</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Deodis Fleming</u>	<u>/s/ Dr. Danny J. Fletcher</u>
<u>/s/ Rev. David C. Freeman</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Carla Gibson</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Johnny D. Gilbert Jr.</u>
<u>/s/ Ms. Mary Givens</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Joe Gray</u>	<u>/s/ Hon. Judy Green</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Charles C. Harris</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Jimmy Hammock</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Jay Hartman</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Johnny Hasan</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Larry Hicks</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Antony Hobbs</u>
<u>/s/ Dr. Morris Holmes</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Sammie Holmes</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Joe Howard</u>
<u>/s/ Hon. Marion A. Humphrey (Ret.)</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Vernita T. Humphrey</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Curtis Johnson</u>
<u>/s/ Ms. Wanda Jones</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Janis Kearney</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Emily Kearns</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Ray Kimbrough Sr.</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Darryl Lee</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Kimberly Lee</u>
<u>/s/ Hon. Wilhelmina Epps Lewellen</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Howard L. Love</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Kenyon K. Lowe Sr.</u>
<u>/s/ Rev. Dr. C.E. McAdoo</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. LeRon McAdoo</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Gregory R. Marks</u>
<u>/s/ Ms. Mary L. Rogers-Marks</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. John McAllister</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Dwight Merritt</u>
<u>/s/ J. Barrington Minix Sr.</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Deborah Mitchell</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Evelyn Moorehead, Esq.</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Bob Nash</u>	<u>/s/ Hon. Olly Neal (Ret.)</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Tracey-Ann Nelson</u>
<u>/s/ Ms. Daalyah Dawan Newborn</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Ronnie Paige</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. J. Andre' Pendleton Sr.</u>
<u>/s/ Ms. LaWanda Pendleton</u>	<u>/s/ Ms. Sylvia Perkins</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Joseph Pierce</u>
<u>/s/ Mr. Austin Porter Jr., Esq.</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Willard Proctor Jr., Esq.</u>	<u>/s/ Pastor D.L. Richardson</u>
<u>/s/ Hon. Lottie H. Shackelford</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Tim Scott</u>	<u>/s/ Mr. Gregory Summers</u>

/s/ Rep. Joy Springer

/s/ Ms. Deborah Springer Suttlar

/s/ Ms. Rhonda Stewart

/s/ Ms. Carolyn Taylor

/s/ Pastor Clarence Thornton

/s/ Rev. Dr. LaVerne Bell-Tolliver

/s/ Rev. Dwight Townsend

/s/ Ms. Georgia Walton

/s/ Mr. Victor Warren

/s/ Dr. Tanya Washington

/s/ Mr. Robert Webb

/s/ Rev. Jameel Wesley

/s/ Mr. Brennan White

/s/ Mr. Harvey Wiley

/s/ Mr. John Wiley

/s/ Bishop Ronald Wilkerson

/s/ Ms. Joyce A. Williams

/s/ Ms. Mary Louise Williams

/s/ Dr. Rodney Williams

/s/ Ms. Joyce Willis

/s/ Mr. Robert Young

/s/ Ms. Gwen Strong Zeigler

/s/ Ms. Rosalyn Zeigler