Policy Alliance for Communities of Color (PACC) Resolution of: Defunding Austin Police Department

We, the Policy Alliance for Communities of Color at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, agree that the following resolution was made on 7/22/2020.

We do hereby consent to the adoption of the following as if it was adopted at a regularly called meeting of PACC. In accordance with the bylaws of this alliance, the PACC at the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs decided that:

In solidarity with Black Americans and the Black Lives Matter movement, the City of Austin can and should re-imagine justice by implementing significant cuts—at least $100 million— to the Austin Police Department budget for the 2020-21 fiscal year.

While it is commendable that the City Manager considers the Office of Police Oversight to be integral in a more just public safety process, more audits and investigations will not solve the problem of police brutality in Austin. Investigations by the Equity Office, Office of the City Auditor, and the Meadows Mental Health Police Institute have already identified areas in which over-policing occurs and offered policy solutions the city has yet to implement.

Therefore, it is resolved, that the LBJ Policy Alliance for Communities of Color advocates for:

Alternative public safety solutions in the development of the City of Austin's 2020-21 budget.

We recommend that the City Council defund the Austin Police Department by at least $100 million and invest that money into community-based solutions in neighborhoods most affected by over-policing and extreme use of force.

Police reform tactics, such as body cameras, cultural sensitivity training, and community policing have failed to improve public safety or police accountability. Crime largely related to economic insecurity, mental illness, and addiction cannot be solved with punitive responses. The police only have the tools to intimidate, cite, and arrest individuals who need support services related to housing, public health, and other support services.

It would be more beneficial to the greater Austin Community if the city invested in its low income residents, built sidewalks, parks, childcare facilities, schools and community healthcare clinics. We find that it is imperative to provide more services for low-income residents of Austin. These actions, especially in the midst of a global pandemic in which tens of millions have lost their jobs and their health insurance, would be a better way to invest in our community than law enforcement.