S1: 02:06 I'd like to ask all of our panelists and community members to assemble, come together. We should be making our way back to the table so that we can start our meeting. Who are we waiting on? We got just about everybody?

[silence]

S1: 02:56 Well, let me introduce myself and say thank you to everybody who's assembled here. It's about 12:42 and this is the first community meeting of the working group on policy involve deadly force encounters. The purpose of the group is to reduce police involve deadly force encounter. Whether or not such an encounter is deemed to be justified or not, the goal is to reduce them. To reduce any interactions where we lose people. That means our citizens, that means our officers, and of course, our officers are also citizens, but that is the goal. And toward that end, we are going to examine a number of critical issues and those issues involve how to investigate, who investigates, what the protocols might be and we're going to discuss prosecution as well. This working group is not going to try to solve every issue in and involving our society. We know that there's historic systemic racism, we know that there is poverty, we know that there's all kinds of challenges in the world that we live in. But we believe that this group would be well served if we took this time to focus our attention on reducing police officer involved, deadly force encounters, whether it's a citizen, whether it's an officer, whether it's legally deemed to be justified or not. We just need fewer and I will say that this is a goal, we have the right people in the room. That's not to say there are not more who could also add to the work that we're here to do. But we have Democrats, Republicans, law enforcement, prosecution, citizens, community voices, we have people from mental health community, we have people from tribal communities, we have people from across the state of Minnesota. I think we have a diverse group. And I think that we're well-positioned to take on this difficult subject. And it is a difficult subject. Let me just pass the microphone to Commissioner Harrington, but my deepest and most earnest thank you to all of you for participating. Commissioner?

S2: 05:35 Thank you, Attorney General. There's an old saying, it's an old Chinese phrase that I remember learning in my college days, it translates to, "Better to light a candle than to curse the darkness." I'm a person who believes in light and that we're better off when we can see where we are going and it's best to know where we have been and where we stand today if we're going to actually make any real change. The purpose of this working group was to bring the light to a subject that impacts everyone across the state of Minnesota. It impacts cops in hundreds and thousands of police agencies, it involves cops that are in the 87 sheriff's departments. It involves moms and it involves dads and involves community members who mourn the loss of their loved ones. And those loved ones sometimes walk out the door with our greatest hopes, riding with them and they never come back. I'm a person who believes that if we're going to make change, and that's what I'm committed to here, that is why the Attorney General and I in January when we first both took office, began having this conversation. We believe that change is
necessary and both of us who live in community, we both spend an enormous amount of our lives in community meetings, in neighborhood groups, in talking to people, we have been hearing the voices calling for change. And now we’re in a position to try and make that change a reality and not just a talking point. That is what I see the purpose of this working group being. It is not to create another study that will sit on shelf, it’s not to fill reams of books or gigabytes of digital evidence, it’s to actually make change, and the change that I am looking for. The change that I am hopeful of is a world where there are less officer-involved, deadly force encounters, however you want to frame that. I want moms to go to bed at night when their child leaves the house and feel good about the fact that they really do believe that that young man or young woman is coming home. And I want wives and moms and dads of cops when they send their young person out into the world for them to come home, too, and not leave the business or not be involved in what is truly some of the most awful parts of the police profession. In order to do that I think we have to take a more holistic approach to our work. I’m fond of the public health approach. It says we should be looking at prevention. How do we prevent deadly force encounters from happening to begin with? What can we do to work in community so that we can prevent as many as we can? I believe that we should be looking at intervention whether it’s de-escalation or mental health troops or what works out there. And I believe in holding people accountable. People in my sense writ large. If a cop messed up then we hold the cop accountable. I think that should go without saying. Police officers come to the profession with a great deal of authority, and they also have, because of that, a great deal of responsibility. And I want to make sure that when we are holding them accountable that we’re doing it the best way possible. And so, I am very gratified to look around this room and see colleagues and friends and people that I am just meeting for the first time who are joining me in this effort to make change. Because change is necessary. Change is never easy. I recognize that. But not doing anything, not taking action, not taking leadership in this, in my mind only means that the status quo will continue. And I’ve been to way too many funerals in the community and to way too many cop funerals to ever think that that’s a status quo that I personally want to live in. So, I thank all of you who have come today. And I thank the testifiers who are going to help enlighten us, who are going to help us look for a future with less deadly force encounters, and look at a process and look at the methods where we can make our communities whole. Part and parcel with this is, in fact, a process and I will end on that comment. I am a fairly old cop but I am very fond of the work that the 21st century policing initiative started by President Obama brought forth. The fundamental tenet of that was how do we establish and reinforce trust between the community and the police who are sworn to serve them. I hope that this process that we’re now engaged in on this particular topic adds to the body of work that increases the trust, reinforces the trust, and builds on the trust that that body of work President Obama and the 21st century policing study group brought us. Thank you.

S1: 11:45

Thank you. And now I’d like to just have the panelists introduce each other. Then we’ll go to our first panel. So why don't we start with you, chief?

S5: 11:54

Kevin Torgerson, Olmstead County Sheriff's office.

S1: 11:57

Thank you.

S6: 11:57

Mark Rubin, St. Louis County Attorney--

S7: 12:00


S8: 12:05

Bill Ingebrigsten in Senate district eight.
Clarence Castile. Uncle of Philando Castile.

Dr. Brittany Lewis. Senior research associate at the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs.

Mike [Sedaris?] [inaudible].


Chanda Smith-Baker at the Minneapolis Foundation.

Jim Copple with Strategic Applications International and 21CP and facilitator.

Chief Arradondo.

Medaria Arradondo. Chief of Police, Minneapolis Police Department.

Thank you, and so with that let me just introduce our panelists. First, let me introduce Minnesota's own Valerie Castile who was the mother of Philando Castile who was a beloved lunch worker at--

Supervisor.

Supervisor--

Just call it what it is.

Supervisor at the Hill--

J.J. Hill--

J.J. Hill School and was very well respected by all of his colleagues, friends and community and was tragically taken away in deadly force encounter involving law enforcement. Since that time, Valerie Castile has become a nationally recognized speaker on this issue and has brought a lot of light and critical perspective to the dialogue. Also, joining us is Wanda Johnson who is the current founder of the Oscar Grant Foundation. Those of who saw the film, Fruitvale Station saw the tragic loss of her son also in an officer-involved deadly force encounter. In the wake of the loss of her son she has spoken out nationally, organized, spoken in the media and has worked tirelessly to try to bring reform and change to prevent future similar losses such as the one she and her family suffered from. So, with that, I'll ask our speakers to say their name for the record and offer their remarks.

My name is Valerie Castile. Philando Castile was my one and only son and he was dedicated to his job. He loved his job and he was a respectable individual. I did everything humanly possible to nurture him and love him to be a productive citizen and he did all of that. He wanted to carry a weapon not because he had to. Because it was his right and he had that weapon and for me to continuously say the same thing to most of you, most of you I know and I've been talking and saying the same thing for three years and actually, excuse me if I stumble. Because I wasn't invited to speak today. I was the second thought. So, with that being said, I created a foundation because of my son and I wanted to keep him alive because he shouldn't be dead and I wanted to do everything that he held near and dear to his heart and by him loving his job he would pay for the school children's lunch if they didn't have the money, he'd pay for it out of his own pocket. So, I developed a Philando Castile Relief Foundation and he was big on family as well. So, we help families that lose their loved ones to gun violence. Not necessarily police violence, gun violence as a whole and I continue to pay off those school lunch debts throughout our struggling community. Community is big and I think I can speak for all the mothers who have lost a loved one through
police brutality because a lot of them weren't doing anything. They may have been having a mental health issue or were running or being unarmed and we have to change that. Because this is not how God intended on us coexisting and in order for us to coexist differently, things have to change and like you said, change is difficult. Nobody wants change. Especially when it's at a medium. If it's beneficial where we over this way, why change it? It's okay where I'm sitting so why should we change things? But it's not okay. I'm a mother 100% and I care about this community and what happened today is because our community is traumatized. Everybody in this community is hurting because day after day it's always something happened. Someone's child is being killed and we have to do whatever we can do to change that. We're all human beings. We're supposed to be the most intelligent creatures on this planet but you look how we treat one another. It's disheartening that I have to sit up here and talk about how we should treat one another when it's so simple. The 20th century policing, what did you say it is? Treat people the way you want to be treated. That can solve a lot of these issues if people just treated people the way they wanted to be treated. Even with law enforcement. It takes me to a different place when your honesty and your integrity can get you killed. This is a whole new ballgame we talking about right now. You can't even be honest and you be murdered. I appreciate you guys having me here but it starts with who are you hiring? What type of people are you hiring? Is there some type of information that you have to gather just like in an interview? You interview people and you see where their head at or do they go through a mental evaluation beforehand or are they like my sister Wanda said, the age difference? Your brain develops at a certain age so, are these people really mentally capable of handling situations and having something that will take your life? I'm just doing the best I can. We got to get guns off the street. We need mental health issues. Our people are suffering. They're hurting. They came in here because you all are here and they know in order for something to be done, they need to talk to all you all. So what better to storm then right here where all you all are at. You can't do nothing but hear me because I'm right here in your face. So that's why they did that and I commend them doing it. I mean, it's a time and a place for everything, but look how many people here in one spot, you can't get this many people in one spot. So yes, we're hurting. We need your help. We're traumatized. What can you do to help us? We can't do it. We can't change no laws. You can. And this is your responsibility and your obligations to help us. Help your community. Thank you for having me.

S2: 20:33

Thank you very much. [applause] Miss Johnson.

S16: 20:41

Yes. My name is Wanda Johnson. I’m the mother of Oscar Grant. I remember the words of what Dr. Martin the King said. He said that I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. And as I reflect on that, and I think about what happened with my son on January 1st, 2009 at the Fruitvale BART station, one of the things that came to mind that my parents always taught me is that you would treat people the way that you would want to be treating. That you would love people as you love yourself. And so I’m saying all this to say that when my son and his friends was approached because of the call that the officers had received that there was some kind of altercation on the train, when the officers arrived at the station, and they didn't see anything, but because the train operator had said it could have been four— it could have been some black men or BLs, that BMs that were in the altercation. And when the officers ran to the platform and already had their tasers out, it speaks volumes to me. It says to me that there was some preconceived notion in his mind that that evening, he was going to do something to somebody. And he was the lead officer on that platform. And I’m saying this to say to us that as duties, as officers of the law and as everyone around the circle that is hearing our testimonies
on today, we have an obligation. We can either instigate a situation, or we can cause that situation, the fire, to go out. We can turn up the fire, or we can decrease it. And in my son losing his life on that platform, it clearly showed me that the officers who was in charge escalated the situation instead of deescalating. I'm glad that there's officers in this circle because one of the things that I know for sure is that when officers have been trained - it was testified at my son's trial - that they are trained to eliminate the target. But I also think about how officers are also hired to protect and serve and if officers, if you're required to protect, and serve and serve the community in serving the community and means to deescalate situations or not to escalate situations. The community that was here today is crying out because families have not had the justice that the liberty scale which shows a balance says that we should have. We look at our bill of rights and we look at how we also look at word says that all men are created equal under the sight of all men and of God. And so because all men are created equal, all men should be treated the same way. There should not be a racial profiling. There should not be the discrimination and there should not be where you're stopping an African-American young man and the first thing you say to him is, "Do you have any guns?" Those encounters where lives are lost, in the case of my son, when the officer arrived, there was no fight on the train that he's seen. He saw man of color and made an assumption that these men were part of what was going on and called several different men off the train. When he called them off the train, he saw some Hispanic man as well and he called them off the train and told them to get up against the wall. And I really look at that picture today. And even on yesterday as I was flipping through, I was reading an article, how it said that one in a thousand black men could be killed by police encounters. Where are we going in America? People are not born racist but it's a thought behavior. And we must learn, and we must come to the place where we unteach what we've been thought because it's important.

If you look at Oscar's case and even the officer who used racial [inaudible] against my son, as an officer, you have a duty, no matter-- if you're called all kind of names, psychologically, you have to be smart enough not to revert and go into that state of mentality, argue back and forth with the victim or the person, the detainee, or whoever's there you're trying to address because of a situation or at a stop. I'm here today because it hurts my heart to see 10 years later we're still at this place. I'll never forget the words of my son and his eyes when I looked at the video finally after years. Number one, he said, "I have a four-year-old daughter. Don't shoot me. Don't shoot me. Why? Because you have the power to shoot me." "Don't shoot me," is what he said. As officers, you have the power to defuse a situation. You also have the power to eliminate the target. Or to discharge that bullet from your weapon, realizing that if you discharge that bullet, it's not coming back into this chamber but it's going out. And it could change a whole nation of people's lives forever. And we wonder why so many people, so many of our youth, are walking around and doing all kind of things. It's because of the PTSD that often many of them face. When my son laid there on the platform and there was one officer at his head and one officer at his feet, when he laid there and said that, "I have a daughter. Don't shoot me," and yet the officer stood up and discharged his weapon - and many people say, "Oh, he got confused from his taser and his gun" - that says values right there. If you don't know the taser from your gun in the heat of a moment, you don't belong on any force. The taser and the gun, they have different weights, different colors. You wear them on different sides the majority of the time. And if you're not training your officers to know the difference between a gun and a taser, shame on us as America. Shame on us, because there's other countries who have the same color of people as myself and other nationalities walking around, that don't do as much killing as we do here in America. We say we're
the land of the free, the home of opportunity, and we are killing people at such a high rate. And then we disregard it.

When Oscar laid on that platform and was shot, and the blood began to ooze out of his mouth, it was a picture that was implanted in his friends' head for the rest of their lives. And I'm saying this to say that not only was my family affected, but all the people around in that community on that BART train that night, his friends, were all affected. And we want to know why many people are doing what they're doing in this nation? It's because we don't give them the help that they need after seeing something like that. Officers, when they kill someone, they get immediately trained. They get immediately counseled if that's what they want. They still get to go home and go on paid leave. But you know what happens to the families when they lose a loved one? And especially some of those who don't have insurance for that child? They have to go out around in the communities and try to put on Facebook, GoFundMe pages, "Can you help me pay for my child's funeral? Can you help me counsel my granddaughter?" Why? Because there's no programs set up for them. But it's set up for officers of the law. You get to go to counseling. The union will pay for your funeral. The union will pay for your court case. The union will pay for your attorney. The union will pay for everything else you need. But the families, my family, we didn't have a union behind us. [Valerie?] didn't have a union behind her. No. We didn't have where the union put a pool of money together, and even paid while the officer went to jail, and, "Come on, we're going to set up a GoFundMe page for the officer." That didn't happen with our families. We're left to bury our children. We're left to bury our children. We're left to tell our grandchildren - or I'm left to tell my granddaughter, and other families who have lost theirs are left to tell their grandchildren - "No, your dad's not here. He was killed by a police officer." We're left to listen on the television, to hear, "Oh, Oscar had a criminal record. Oscar was a bad kid. He did this. He did that." And the officer who shot him was such a loveable, cuddly, big teddy bear officer who never got in trouble. But yet, they didn't tell about the use-of-force issues that he had previously. But everything was done to demonize the victims who lost their loved ones. And part of this, too, has to do with the media because officers' attorneys know exactly what to say to the media to get the community to believe that that person who was shot by that police officer deserved everything that they got. When the devil is alive. That person, somebody loved. And no matter, contrary to what may be said, somebody loved that individual enough to birth that individual, and that individual should have the opportunity to change.

We cannot allow the system to convict, execute our children any longer. We must come to a place where training, number one-- first the hiring practice. Look at our hiring practice of hiring officers. You can become, and I said this yesterday-- it takes you longer to become a barber than it does an officer. And then we say for these mass killings that have taken place that these young men who did the killing, their minds wasn't totally developed. But yet we still put officers who are 21 and 22 years old right on the force to handle a problem that they never even encountered in their life, and are just working on past issues when they were maybe [then?] in high school or elementary school. We’re putting officers in the areas where they've never even seen a black person or know how to deal with an African American person. Or we’re sticking them in those areas where they've heard that African American young men and young women are equated to pitbulls. Are equated to mean, hateful, they carry guns. And then the officers take the same idea what they heard right in through those neighborhoods. And then when they have an encounter, the first word, "I feared for my life." And the individual turns out at sometimes, many times, don't even have a gun. The same way the scenario was played with Oscar. You could look at the whole script line for many of the other shootings that has taken place in our country. And
we have a duty. We have a duty as citizens to look at our judicial system and to tear those areas down that need to be torn down and to work to rebuild them. Because for sure we understand that all the lives that have been taken, it wasn't just an officer having an accident. We're sure that many of these encounters that officers have had with citizens could have been avoided and the life could have still been lived has the situations been handled differently. And so I'm saying all this to say today, and I'm sure Valerie would agree with me, is that the training, the hiring practices, the accountability piece, needs to be looked at.

I understand from going to trial with my son that prosecutors have to face something totally different if they say they're going to charge the officer. I understand that. I've seen that. I watched how District Attorney David Stein in the Alameda County in Oakland, California was treated because he took on the case. I understand that. I saw that. But I also understand and I also believe that if you are able to get into those shoes, if you choose that as an occupation, that you sure darn well better be able to accept that there's going to be some uncomfortable positions that you're going to be put in. And as those positions are maybe uncomfortable, that your mindset should be I'm going to get justice for whoever it is at no matter what the cost is. And so again, I'm grateful to be here, but it also saddens me that 10 years later we still haven't caused and moved forward to make legislative, change some laws, even better. We still haven't worked to change our hiring tactics of police officers. We still haven't worked to a place where we're holding officers accountable for their actions. I wish that somebody would have said to me when Oscar was killed, "Okay. Because Oscar had a job at the time, we're going to continue to pay you." That didn't happen, but it happens for the officer family when they go out and kill someone. And the last thing I want to leave you with is this, "That all men," as Martin Luther King said, "are created equal." In the Statue of Liberty or the liberty scales, they're supposed to be even and what I have found is when an officer loses his life that we hold the officer up at a higher standard. And maybe because he was doing a civil duty working for the government. But I want to say to you when I heard the chat today, that all lives matter, it doesn't matter. All lives. And until we begin to understand that, that all lives matter, we'll continue to have these kind of meetings. And it may be uncomfortable. It may be something that you said, "Well, I've heard it all over. I've heard it before and doesn't matter." But it is something that needs to be talked about. And we should work to ensure change. When Oscar was on the platform, he told his friends, "You guys, be quiet. Follow the instructions of the officers so we can go home tonight." Oscar didn't go home. His blood laid right on that concrete. And so I'm saying in closing that you have an obligation. Don't let someone else blood be on your doorpost because you failed to do what's right. You failed to say your partner, "No, man. Don't do it. Let's go." Because you can do that. You have that ability. Don't let the blood be on your doorpost because you failed to press charges against an officer for a wrong that was committed. Don't let the blood be on your post because you failed to do anything for all of the people who have testified and came to you with this concern. We have an obligation as a country. All people have been created equal by God himself. And from life to death, we have and we will face our maker one day and what will you say when you're standing before Him if you could have prevented an encounter that could have ended up deadly? And what would you say to yourself if you could have charged an officer for an encounter when he deserved to be charged? Thank you.

[inaudible].

We have about 15 minutes.
Mr. Chair. I want to first extend my condolences to you, Miss Johnson. And I say [inaudible] a lot of endearment and out of respect for you for both your losses. I appreciate your strength and your courage being here today to share your thoughts and what you've been encountering and experiencing since those tragic times and experiences in your lives. I'm also very inspired to hear the work that you've both been doing in terms of advocating for better hiring, [medical?] [inaudible] psychological interviews for officers. I think that's so important as a chief of police. And also, that you've touched upon mental health issues within our community and our broader community. And as a chief of police, that is something that I certainly want to make sure that our elected officials are aware of because as the saying goes, "Hurt people hurt people," and we need more of those types of services. I think that would also help the police department. Your conversations here today about the impact that we as police have, particularly on our black and brown young men. And I would just like to ask from you. I know that you have said it very eloquently, Ms. Johnson, that 10 years later we are still here. But I'm wondering from your experience and your location where you're at and certainly [inaudible] from you, have you seen any increments of change so far? And again, some of the things that we can do, whether it's our implicit bias training, de-escalation - I'm glad you mentioned that. That is certainly key for us - and so I was just wondering if you could share some of those thoughts [which you may have?] [inaudible].

Well, first of all, back when Philando was first murdered, the police department was given an extra $11 million for a training. But [inaudible] [know?] exactly how the money was spent as far as the de-escalation part of it, the training part of it, [inaudible] how many people actually took advantage to that and went to those classes and went to those special training procedures, how many actually did that. Because it was well-known that when the police go to their extra training programs, they would go to the shooting range or drive their cars. They never took the de-escalation training or sensitivity training or anything like that. It would be interesting to know just by how many people actually took advantage to their situation when it did occur.

For me, two things. One of the things that I know that is very important is that the community policing relations. And oftentimes, police officers come from different areas so they don't know their community that they serve. And it's important to spend time in that community. Now, if I was in charge of the police department, one of the things that I will make mandatory for my officers would be that even before they became an officer is to be involved in community relations in that neighborhood. And why we do that is because you should know the neighborhood that you police, okay? Oftentimes, police officers don't know the neighborhood they police, and they go into that neighborhood with preconceived notions of what they heard, right? And so if an officer, or a cadet, would be in that neighborhood before he was hired onto the police force, walking around in his shirt and jeans, T-shirt, whatever, not in intimidation stance where it's often the police are in their uniform with their hand on their gun walking around. No, not that. Not even having [inaudible] [we're doing?] community service by having baseball games with the community, okay? That's your service. That's something that you guys put into place-- That's something that was put into place, not you per se, but that's something that was put into place. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about developing a real relationship, okay, with the community that you serve, okay? I'm talking about being able to say, "You know what? I know this sister here and she has a granddaughter, 7 years old.", okay, "I know something about her." I'm saying it's important to build a relationship with the community that you serve in a comfortable-- not an intimidating setting because...
when people say, "Oh, well, we're going to have community-- the police are going to give away school supplies." or something, for example, and they came with their uniform and they come with their gun, that's an intimidation to the community. And so improving community relations with the community would the perception of how the community feels about policing. And so that's important. I have seen where-- Since my son died, when he first died, sharpshooters were all around the buildings. Police was walking around with their guns. We would have [vigils?], intimidating stances. And one of the things I did, like I'm saying to you guys, I went to them. I said, "Look, this is a vigil, okay? We don't need you here intimidating the crowd. If you want to come, why don't you wear your suit, your tie, your jeans, shirt? If you've got to have your gun, that's fine but you don't have to have it right on your side so that everybody knows that you're the big chief, the big dog in town, or the big dog at the program. You don't have to do that."

Build relationships with people. This is the problem with our communities of policing, is that it's you and us. You're here. We're here. That's how we've set the stage and because we're here, you're going to follow everything that we tell you to do like good old people, shut your mouth and do it. This is how we've set up the standard. Well, guess what? People have free speech. They have a right to say what they want to say and as an officer of the law, you have the right to listen. You may not like it but you still have a right to listen. And so as you listen to the community, when you take that time to get to know the community you serve, you will see a decrease in all the categories that you're hired to protect and serve in.

And do we have time for maybe a couple more questions? Does anyone else have any?

I don't have a question but I just want to answer Miss [Rhonda's?] question about certain programs. I work with the City of St. Paul Police Department once in a while and I know they have a program, it's called LECPA which is the Law Enforcement Career Path Academy. And what they have there is young people-- to me, young people is anybody under 40 years old but these young people are between the ages of 18 and 24. And this program is set up for them to become police officers but they go out and they work in the community, and they're kids of color. All different colors: African American, Hispanic, Latino, whatever the case may be. But they go out in the community and work in our neighborhoods, work in our rec centers, go to our different community events. And they actually get involved with the communities and they are getting to know the communities. And by them being in this program they will have better opportunities of becoming Saint Paul police officers. They get monies to go to college. They get small stipends to live on. And me, myself, by noticing this particular program I think it's a really good program on bringing minority kids into the police department.

But see, the problem is, is you want to bring the police into the community. You're talking about having the community go into the policing. The ideal is to go to the baseball game. You don't have to host it. Encourage the children there that's playing in the baseball game. Go to the basketball game - and you don't even have to have a child on the team - and work with the basketball team. Not having to take the people, the community, to the ideal of-- which is good. I'm glad that they're doing that. Not having to take the ideal, "Okay, we going to bring these kids to train them up into becoming police." No. How about mentoring them? How about saying, "You know what? I know this young man lost his father." How about you take that young man and you take him to the movies? You spend some time with him. You get to know him. And not have any other ulterior motive involved in it. See, because it's easy to say, Clarence, for them to say, "Okay well we're going to set up this program. And
we’re going to have the kids come into the program." That’s comfortable setting. Get uncomfortable. Get uncomfortable. It’s going to take us to get uncomfortable about some situation-- you think it’s comfortable for me to go into the police station and talk about what happened with my son with police officers who are saying, "That’s our job"? With police officers who are saying, "Well, he should’ve listened"? With police officers who will saying-- and I remember one even attorney said, "Well, he caused his own demise." So, you got to get uncomfortable. If you want to help somebody, if you want to change the community, you got to get uncomfortable. "Well I’m going to take my uniform off today, I’m going to put a T-shirt on, I’m a go up to the school, and I’m a just hang out with the kids. They ain’t even got to know I’m a officer. But I’m just Bill today or I’m just Tom today or I’m just Joe today. And I’m going to work with these kids and I’m going to help them and encourage them and push them forward in their life."

I think the community’s cry is, "We don’t trust the police." Right? That’s the cry we’re hearing, okay? I know because I’m there because I’m one of them that had that attitude, okay? I was always raised to how you respect police officers. They have a job to do. You respect them, they respect you. They’re here to protect and serve. But I also know that you have to treat individuals the way you want to be treated. You got to remember when you was coming up the things that you desired and the things that you wanted and what was important to you. And maybe that same very thing might be important to somebody else. So how can I help them achieve that very goal? If you want to be a success you start investing in the lives of our children and you will see a return on your investment. Even more, when you come outside of the walls of saying, "I'm just going to bring them in," but, "I'm going to go out and I'm going to pull them. I don't even have to bring them in but I could mentor them right where they’re at. And then they'll have a desire to become police officers. They’ll have a desire to become district attorneys and judges and council members." When we begin to look at it that way-- I think sometimes we forget. And we don’t want to remember all the ugly stuff that we did in our closets - right? - and some of the ugly stuff we’re still doing now. We don’t want to remember those things and so we don’t want to be bothered when other people have ugly stuff going on. But we got to remember where we came from and what we could do to help others get to where they need to be.

Thank you, Doctor [inaudible].

Thank you both, Miss Castile and Miss Johnson, for your testimonies. Something I would love for you both to speak to a little bit - I don’t think it’s talked about enough - the kind of rippling impact that the use of deadly force have on families: black mothers, black children, and communities in particular. And I also know that women like yourselves are reached out to by other women and families across the country all the time. And I’m wondering if you’d be willing to share as you all take on a host of trauma that is not your own. But you’re also trying to hold up other people as they process through the death of family members, some of whom are black men, some of whom are not and are seeking refuge because there aren’t any resources. If there are things that you can share with us with how folks are reaching out to you, the things they’re sharing, and what resources are coping mechanisms that are there to support them, if at anything, to help us think more deeply about the families and trauma that are kind of rippling from the result of use of deadly force.

We kind of had this discussion already, you and I. I was taken aback when I was invited to do the Minnesota black women and girls town hall meeting recently. And it was pretty much the same setting. Constituents were listeners like now and we were testifiers. And we touched on a lot of broader issues about black women and girls and how deeply they are impact by-- even with police brutality it has that ripple effect and
it bothers you emotionally, financially, spiritually. And we had this conversation about "what can you guys do to help us with our efforts with foster care?" Because a lot of people, they go into depression and we don't know.