



November 9, 2018

**Via First Class and Electronic Mail (conference@sehia.org)**

Jen Spears, President  
Teresa Sprague, Vice President  
Board of Directors  
Southeastern Homicide Investigators Association  
P.O. Box 102  
Sorrento, Florida 32776

**RE: Opposition to SEHIA's decision to invite Deputy Betty Shelby, Deputy David Shelby, and Sergeant Dave Walker to speak at the 2018 SEHIA Conference, Baton Rouge, Louisiana**

Dear President Spears and Vice President Sprague:

On behalf of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF)<sup>1</sup> and the undersigned national, Baton Rouge, and Tulsa-based civil rights leaders, we write to express our concerns and strong opposition to Southeastern Homicide Investigators Association (SEHIA)'s decision to invite Deputy Sheriff Betty Jo Shelby (Deputy Betty Shelby or Deputy Shelby), Deputy Sheriff David Shelby (Deputy David Shelby), and Sergeant Dave Walker (Sergeant Walker) to serve as speakers at the SEHIA conference in Baton Rouge, Louisiana scheduled for November 12-16, 2018. According to the conference website, Deputies Betty and David Shelby plan to discuss "Surviving the Aftermath of a Critical Incident," and Sergeant Walker plans to discuss "Split Second Decisions: An in-depth look at Officer Betty Shelby's OIS" (officer-involved shooting). The officer-involved shooting that will be discussed is Deputy Shelby's September 16, 2016 fatal shooting of Terence Crutcher (Mr. Crutcher), an unarmed Black man in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where each speaker served as an officer for the Tulsa Police Department. In fact, in August 2018, amidst great community opposition,<sup>2</sup> Deputies Betty and David Shelby conducted a similar training based on the killing of Terence Crutcher to officers in Tulsa—only days after Mr. Crutcher would have celebrated his 42<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

Allowing these officers to now share with a national audience of law enforcement personnel how Deputy Shelby "survived" the consequences of a homicide that *she* committed is inconsistent with

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<sup>1</sup> Founded in 1940, LDF is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.

<sup>2</sup> Harrison Grimwood, 'The situation is very ugly': Protest targets Betty Shelby's teaching law enforcement training class, *Tulsa World*, Aug. 27, 2018, [https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/the-situation-is-very-ugly-protest-targets-betty-shelby-s/article\\_ef592b5c-4fb9-5ee1-9f4a-543cb21ac559.html](https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/the-situation-is-very-ugly-protest-targets-betty-shelby-s/article_ef592b5c-4fb9-5ee1-9f4a-543cb21ac559.html); Megan Allison, *Protesters gather as Betty Shelby prepares to teach class for Tulsa County Sheriff's deputies*, Aug. 27, 2018, <https://www.kjrh.com/news/local-news/protesters-gather-as-betty-shelby-prepares-to-teach-class-for-tulsa-county-sheriff-s-deputies>; P.R. Lockhart, *An officer who killed an unarmed black man is teaching other cops how to deal with the aftermath*, *Vox*, Aug. 28, 2018, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/8/28/17792438/betty-shelby-terence-crutcher-police-shooting-tulsa-training-course>.

the purported work of SEHIA members—pursuing justice for homicide victims and their families. Deputy Shelby is not a victim of Mr. Crutcher’s homicide. The late Mr. Crutcher and his survivors are the victims. Deputy Shelby’s subsequent acquittal on manslaughter charges is not an exoneration of her decision to kill an unarmed man that day, as the comments of the jurors following her trial make clear.

For these reasons, we urge you to rescind Deputies Betty and David Shelby’s and Sergeant Walker’s invitation to speak at the 2018 SEHIA conference.

**I. Terence Crutcher was the victim of a homicide committed by Deputy Shelby, whose lack of remorse and reflection after the killing demonstrates that she is unfit to instruct homicide investigators how to survive the aftermath of a critical incident**

Members of SEHIA have the unenviable responsibility of investigating the most “heinous and impactful life events faced by members of society”<sup>3</sup>—homicides. Family and community members of homicide victims rely on investigators to conduct thorough and unbiased probes into the death of their loved ones in the pursuit of justice; and, such investigations are imperative when an unarmed person is killed at the hands of a law enforcement officer who took an oath to protect and serve. When, after an investigation, an arbiter decides that the officer is not criminally culpable, it is understandable that the surviving family and community would be disappointed, as is the case for anyone who survives the homicide of a loved one. And, when the officer who killed the unarmed victim travels throughout the country and shares how *she* managed the emotional and financial challenges faced during her criminal trial resulting from the shooting, it is devastating to the victim’s family and communities all over the country that have experienced a police killing. This has been the experience of the Crutcher family and Tulsa community.

On September 16, 2016, Terence Crutcher, the father of four children, traveled to a music class at the Tulsa Community College. When he arrived, Mr. Crutcher learned that the class had been cancelled due to low enrollment. The son of a preacher, Mr. Crutcher grew up in the church and loved to sing. His faith helped him to cope with years of drug addiction, and he decided to turn his life around by going back to school to enhance his musical gift. The president of the college commented that Mr. Crutcher “was a student who had openly expressed to . . . [college] advisement staff and to others his desire to be successful in college.”<sup>4</sup>

But Mr. Crutcher would never graduate from college. Later that day, according to Deputy Shelby’s account of her interaction with Mr. Crutcher during a *60 Minutes* interview, Deputy Shelby was responding to a domestic violence call when she saw Mr. Crutcher standing in the road. She noticed his size—6 feet and 240 pounds—and his demeanor. His hands were dropped at his sides and he looked “zombie-like,” as if he was under the influence of PCP, she said.<sup>5</sup> She noticed an abandoned car ahead and asked Mr. Crutcher if it belonged to him. He said something she did not understand and

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<sup>3</sup> Southeastern Homicide Investigators Association, *Goals of the conference*, [www.SEHIA.org](http://www.SEHIA.org) (last visited Oct. 28, 2018).

<sup>4</sup> Statement from Tulsa Community College President Leigh B. Goodson regarding death of student Terence Crutcher, Sep. 26, 2016, <https://www.tulsacc.edu/about-us/news-and-events/news/statement-tcc-president-leigh-b-goodson-regarding-death-student>.

<sup>5</sup> Officer Betty Shelby on Terence Crutcher shooting, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/terence-crutcher-unarmed-black-man-shooting-60-minutes-2/>.

placed his hands in his pockets. She commanded him to take his hands out of his pocket; he complied and held them up in the air. Deputy David Shelby observed the encounter from a police helicopter. The police officer who accompanied Deputy David Shelby in the helicopter could only see that Mr. Crutcher was a large, Black man with his hands in the air; he then concluded that Mr. Crutcher looked like a “bad dude.”<sup>6</sup>

However, Deputy Shelby confirmed during her interview and sworn trial testimony that Mr. Crutcher was neither belligerent nor aggressive.<sup>7</sup> Deputy Shelby also confirmed that Mr. Crutcher never threatened her, never moved towards her, and never raised his voice at her. Nevertheless, she drew her weapon when, according to her, Mr. Crutcher did not respond to her commands and instead began walking toward his abandoned car with his hands up. Another officer arrived on the scene and drew his Taser. Within minutes, Deputy Shelby fatally shot an unarmed Mr. Crutcher. An autopsy report ruled the death a homicide due to a “penetrating gunshot wound to the chest.”<sup>8</sup> There were no weapons on his person or in the car.

Deputy Shelby was charged with first-degree manslaughter and acquitted by a jury a year later. However, the jurors made the rare decision to also issue a public letter signed by the jury foreman stating that:

[w]hile Officer Shelby made a justifiable decision at the very moment she pulled the trigger according to her training, when reviewing the moments before she discharged her weapon, the jury wonders and some believe that she had other options available to subdue Mr. Crutcher before he reached his car . . . Because of this perceived option that she may have had, many on the Jury could never get comfortable with the concept of Betty Shelby being blameless for Mr. Crutcher’s death, but due to the lack of direct or even circumstantial evidence that she was acting outside of her training in the 30 feet prior to Mr. Crutcher reaching the window of that SUV, the Jury was forced by the rule of law to render a not guilty verdict.<sup>9</sup>

Another juror reported during an interview that Deputy Shelby “was a fearful person . . . [He doesn’t] think she is a bad person, . . . she just shouldn’t be a cop,”<sup>10</sup> The views of these jurors cannot and should not be ignored.

Nevertheless, Deputy Shelby continues to serve in law enforcement, currently at the Rogers County Sheriff’s Office in Rogers County, Oklahoma. She repeatedly paints *herself* as the victim of Mr. Crutcher’s death, claiming that Mr. Crutcher caused his own death by merely walking towards his SUV when she ordered him to stop.<sup>11</sup> When asked during the *60 Minutes* interview what would have changed the outcome, Deputy Shelby did not mention what she would have done differently; instead, she stated that “[i]f he would have communicated with me, if he would’ve just done as I asked him to

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> See Terence Crutcher Report of Investigation by Medical Examiner, <http://www.documentcloud.org/documents/3230323-Terence-Crutcher-Autopsy.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Read full letter from jury that acquitted Tulsa police officer in fatal shooting of Terence Crutcher, available at <https://kfor.com/2017/05/22/read-full-letter-from-jury-that-acquitted-tulsa-police-officer-in-fatal-shooting-of-terence-crutcher/>.

<sup>10</sup> Dylan Goforth, *Juror: ‘We all agreed Betty Shelby should never be a patrol officer again,’* The Frontier, May 18, 2017, <https://www.readfrontier.org/stories/juror-agreed-betty-shelby-never-patrol/>.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

do we would not be here. You and I would never have met, and no one would ever know my name.”<sup>12</sup> This lack of remorse and reflection following the killing of Mr. Crutcher is disturbing and is not the response that communities of color can accept from law enforcement officers. Allowing Deputy Shelby to share her self-centered experience in a critical incident will underscore that killing Black residents does not matter to law enforcement—a notion that SEHIA should not endorse.

At the most basic level, officers who kill unarmed civilians must understand the impact of their actions and acknowledge the harm done to the victim’s family. For example, the officer who fatally shot Walter Scott, an unarmed Black man, as he ran away during a traffic stop in North Charleston, SC apologized to every member of the Scott family after he admitted to federal charges of violating Mr. Scott’s civil rights.<sup>13</sup> It was a welcomed gesture. Deputy Shelby on the other hand, seeks opportunities to influence hundreds of police officers by persistently teaching them how *her* life changed when she killed Mr. Crutcher within minutes of meeting him. While lessons by an officer who misjudged and escalated a situation, resulting tragically in a man’s death, could be extremely valuable for audiences of law enforcement officers as training for de-escalation, Deputy Shelby’s “trainings,” only discuss the challenges she and her husband faced after she killed Mr. Crutcher.<sup>14</sup>

Deputy Shelby is unfit to serve as a speaker at the SEHIA conference; this is especially true because she suspected that Mr. Crutcher was having a possible mental health issue yet opted to follow him with her finger on the trigger instead of calling any crisis intervention teams or considering less than lethal force. SEHIA and its participating law enforcement officers should not agree with Deputy Shelby’s choices cited above that lead to the shooting of Mr. Crutcher.

Further, SEHIA’s choice to amplify Deputy Shelby’s voice and allow her to be the face of “successful” responses to critical incidents will reinforce the divide between community members and law enforcement and, worse, communicate the message that SEHIA will welcome an officer who kills an unarmed, non-violent person of color as a role-model for other officers. SEHIA’s support for *three* separate presentations (led by Deputy Betty Shelby, Deputy David Shelby, and Sergeant Walker) regarding what happened after Deputy Shelby killed Mr. Crutcher, demonstrates unequivocal validation of Deputy Shelby and effectively ratifies her life-ending and dangerous behavior.

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<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Steve Osunsami and Emily Shapiro, *Ex-cop Michael Slager sentenced to 20 years for shooting death of Walter Scott*, ABC News, Dec. 7, 2017, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/cop-michael-slager-faces-19-24-years-prison/story?id=51595376>; see also Chris Fuchs, *Ex-Cop Peter Liang Apologizes to Akai Gurley's Domestic Partner in Meeting*, NBC News, Mar. 24, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/ex-cop-peter-liang-apologizes-akai-gurley-s-domestic-partner-n544921>.

<sup>14</sup> Bill Hutchinson and Sabina Ghebremedhin, *Officer who killed unarmed black man responds to critics of her 'critical incident' course*, ABC News, Aug. 29, 2018, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/protest-erupts-critical-incident-class-taught-oklahoma-officer/story?id=57448147>.

## II. Deputy Betty Shelby, Deputy David Shelby, and Sergeant Walker’s presentations will exacerbate plummeting confidence in police and mental distress experienced by communities of color that have lost loved ones at the hands of police

For almost 80 years, LDF has worked to address police violence and misconduct in communities of color.<sup>15</sup> In 2015, following a series of highly publicized police-involved shootings of unarmed men, women, and children of color in cities across this country, LDF launched its national Policing Reform Campaign, which partners with lawyers, clergy, activists, victims of police violence, and law enforcement leaders to promote unbiased and accountable policing policies and practices. Through our collective work, we recognize that police killings and misconduct, which disproportionately occur in communities of color,<sup>16</sup> have resulted in plummeting confidence in police in these communities.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, researchers have found, and we have witnessed, that “police killings of unarmed black Americans negatively affect the mental wellbeing of black American adults in the general US population.”<sup>18</sup> The researchers explain further that:

Racism, like trauma, can be experienced vicariously. Police killings of unarmed black Americans might compromise mental health among other black Americans through various mechanisms, including heightened perceptions of systemic racism and lack of fairness, loss of social status and self-regard, increased fear of victimisation and greater mortality expectations, increased vigilance, diminished trust in social institutions, reactions of anger, activation of prior traumas, and communal bereavement.<sup>19</sup>

The mental and emotional impact of the police killing of Mr. Crutcher, an unarmed Black man, by Deputy Shelby, a white officer, is clear.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in August 2018, when concerned Tulsans learned that Deputy Shelby was scheduled to conduct a training on how she “surviv[ed] the aftermath of a critical incident,” the outrage was swift and direct:

- “This class that Betty Shelby is being afforded the opportunity to teach . . . it is called ‘surviving the aftermath of a critical incident.’ And I think the words are real pretty, but the situation is very ugly. Betty Shelby was acquitted of manslaughter, hired at the

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<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., *Shepherd v. Florida* 341, U.S. 50, 55 n.4 (1951) (overturning death sentences of Black defendants noting evidence of brutal, inhuman beatings of defendants by state officers); see also, Complaint, *Davis, et al. v. City of New York, et al.*, Case No. 1:10-cv-00699-SAS-HBP (S.D.N.Y. Jan. 28, 2010) (challenging the unlawful stopping, questioning and arresting of African American and Latino public housing residents and their guests by New York City Police Department officers), <http://www.naacpldf.org/update/court-approves-final-settlement-federal-class-action-lawsuitchallenging-police-practices-nyc>.

<sup>16</sup> Maggie Fox, *Police killings hit people of color hardest, study finds: more years of life are lost among blacks, Hispanics than whites*, NBC News, May 7, 2018, <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/health-news/police-killings-hit-people-color-hardest-study-finds-n872086>.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Jeffrey M. Jones, *In U.S., Confidence in Police Lowest in 22 Years*, Gallup, Jun. 19, 2015, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/183704/confidence-police-lowest-years.aspx> and Jim Norman, *Confidence in Police Back at Historical Average*, Gallup, Jul. 10, 2017, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/213869/confidence-police-back-historical-average.aspx>.

<sup>18</sup> Jacob Bor *et al.*, *Police killings and their spillover effects on the mental health of black Americans: a population-based, quasi-experimental study*, 307, *The Lancet*, Vol. 392 (July 28, 2018), <https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2818%2931130-9>.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 302.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Arianna Pickard, *Black Tulsans share an unexposed reality now in the spotlight after national tragedies*, *Tulsa World*, July 24, 2016, [https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/black-tulsans-share-an-unexposed-reality-now-in-the-spotlight/article\\_f188ed45-bf03-5770-b210-7998f959e570.html](https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/black-tulsans-share-an-unexposed-reality-now-in-the-spotlight/article_f188ed45-bf03-5770-b210-7998f959e570.html).

Rogers County Sheriff's Office, and received back pay from the city. Mr. Crutcher did not survive their encounter. We feel that she created the incident ... Yet she gets to skip to the head of the class after she failed the test, and she gets to become the teacher.” *Oklahoma State Representative Regina Goodwin*,<sup>21</sup>

- “It's just sad for them to use a person as polarizing as Betty Shelby to, in fact, teach a critical incident class. We know that the reality is she was the aggressor and that Terence Crutcher was the victim.” *Pastor Rodney Goss, Morning Star Baptist Church*,<sup>22</sup>
- Deputy Shelby's class is “a slap in the face to all African-Americans. The reason this is a slap in our faces is that they're putting it in our faces and their saying to us, ‘it's fine, deal with it. We don't care how insensitive it is. We're going to have this class and it's OK.’ . . . These are our tax dollars that are being put to use to have this class for other law enforcement officers . . . It's almost as if we, as citizens, don't have a say in saying that we don't want this class going forth.” *Marq Lewis, We the People Oklahoma*<sup>23</sup>
- “We believe the choice to have Betty Shelby lead a class on 'how to survive the aftermath of a critical incident' lacks empathy, is disrespectful to the Crutcher Family, and is intentionally divisive . . . We are saddened that the Crutcher Family has not been given time to heal, and we want to continue to show our gratitude and respect for this wonderful family.” *Aware Tulsa*<sup>24</sup>
- When I found out about Betty Shelby's class “I immediately got sick to my stomach and this feeling of outrage just came all over my body . . . I felt like the feeling I had when she was acquitted. And the feeling I had when I heard of Terence being killed.” *Dr. Tiffany Crutcher, twin sister of Mr. Crutcher*<sup>25</sup>

Deputy Shelby responded to critics through a written statement and an appearance on *Good Morning America*.<sup>26</sup> She commented that her class is intended “to help others by sharing some of the skills [she] used to cope with the stress of [her] critical incident . . . [It] is not about the shooting and . . . [she does] not discuss the shooting.”<sup>27</sup> The notion that her training is not about the shooting is implausible unless she has been involved in other critical incidents during her law enforcement career from which she could draw, which would be troublesome. Additionally, if she in fact does not mention

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<sup>21</sup> *Supra*, note 2, [https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/the-situation-is-very-ugly-protest-targets-betty-shelby-s/article\\_ef592b5c-4fb9-5ee1-9f4a-543cb21ac559.html](https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/local/the-situation-is-very-ugly-protest-targets-betty-shelby-s/article_ef592b5c-4fb9-5ee1-9f4a-543cb21ac559.html).

<sup>22</sup> Doug Criss, *The police officer who fatally shot an unarmed black man in Tulsa now teaches a course on how other cops can 'survive' controversial shootings*, CNN, Aug. 28, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/28/us/betty-shelby-class-trnd/index.html>.

<sup>23</sup> *Supra*, note 14, <https://abcnews.go.com/amp/US/protest-erupts-critical-incident-class-taught-oklahoma-officer/story?id=57448147>.

<sup>24</sup> *Supra*, note 22, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/08/28/us/betty-shelby-class-trnd/index.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Anne Branigin, *'What About Our Aftermath?': Tiffany Crutcher Remembers Her Brother, Terence, Two Years After His Death*, *The Root*, Sep. 16, 2018, <https://www.theroot.com/what-about-our-aftermath-tiffany-crutcher-remembers-h-1829091692>.

<sup>26</sup> See Ashley Ellis, *Rogers County Sheriff's Deputy Betty Shelby responds to protests*, *KTUL*, Aug. 27, 2018, <https://ktul.com/news/local/rogers-county-sheriffs-deputy-betty-shelby-responds-to-protests>.

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

during the training that she killed Mr. Crutcher, then it demonstrates her disregard for his life and the impact his death has on his family.

Even if we assume that Deputies Betty and David Shelby do not mention the details of the officer-involved shooting of Mr. Crutcher during the SEHIA conference, Sergeant Walker, who investigated the shooting for the Tulsa Police Department, certainly will as suggested by the title of his session—*Split Second Decisions: An in-depth look at Officer Betty Shelby's OIS*. His recitation of the facts of the case will likely be most favorable to Deputy Shelby and unfavorable to the victim, Mr. Crutcher, because Sergeant Walker has stated that he believes Deputy Shelby should not have been charged after killing Mr. Crutcher.<sup>28</sup> Providing him with an opportunity to besmirch Mr. Crutcher's character and further advocate against a DA trying to hold an individual accountable for killing an unarmed person would be harmful and contrary to what most homicide detectives do when investigating a victim's death.

Making matters worse, this year's SEHIA conference will be held in Baton Rouge, a city still struggling through the pain of the widely-publicized video of the 2016 police killing of 37-year-old Alton Sterling, a Black man, by a White officer—Blane Salamoni—who hurled profanity and insults at Mr. Sterling, and repeatedly threatened to shoot Mr. Sterling in the head, all while Mr. Sterling simply asked the officers what he had done wrong.<sup>29</sup> Although both state and federal prosecutors declined to charge Salamoni with a crime, Baton Rouge's Police Chief Murphy Paul fired Salamoni after an excessive force investigation, concluding that Salamoni had wrongly used excessive lethal force on Mr. Sterling, against the Baton Rouge Police Department's policies.<sup>30</sup> SEHIA must not set back the progress being made toward addressing police violence in Baton Rouge by allowing an officer as polarizing as Deputy Shelby and her colleagues to speak at its conference.

Additionally, the participation of Deputies Shelby and Sergeant Walker in the SEHIA conference will call into question SEHIA's legitimacy because it would support an individual who committed a homicide instead of the victims of homicides, the community it claims to serve. Also, their participation will both normalize and trivialize avoidable police killings at a critical and tension-filled time in policing reform efforts.<sup>31</sup> The U.S. Department of Justice has entered into federal court-monitored consent decrees with over 20 police departments that have unconstitutionally and systematically engaged in a pattern or practice of unlawful and discriminatory policing, usually against communities of color. This unfortunate reality only further solidifies what we already know: that among some police departments, a culture of violence, misconduct, and over policing on Blacks and other communities of color is accepted. Even Deputy Shelby's former police department—the Tulsa Police Department—came under fire for arresting Black Tulsans nearly twice as much as White

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<sup>28</sup> Samantha Vicent, *Homicide sergeant again implies Shelby shouldn't have been charged in final day of testimony*, Tulsa World, May 16, 2017 <https://newsok.com/article/5549423/homicide-sergeant-again-implies-shelby-shouldnt-have-been-charged-in-final-day-of-testimony>.

<sup>29</sup> Christal Hayes, *Alton Sterling shooting: Baton Rouge officer fired as graphic body camera footage released*, USA Today, Mar. 30, 2018, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/03/30/alton-sterling-shooting-baton-rouge-officer-fired-excessive-force/474566002/>.

<sup>30</sup> Nick Valencia, *Baton Rouge police officer who shot Alton Sterling fired*, CNN, Mar. 31, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/30/us/alton-sterling-investigation-police-hearing/index.html>; see also Ralph Ellis, *How five videos captured the fatal shooting of Alton Sterling*, CNN, Mar. 31, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2018/03/31/us/alton-sterling-video-descriptions/index.html>.

<sup>31</sup> See The Civil Rights Division's Pattern and Practice Police Reform Work: 1994-Present, U.S. Department of Justice, January 2017, <https://www.justice.gov/crt/file/922421/download>.

Tulsans.<sup>32</sup> As police violence and misconduct became more publicized through the deaths of Black men, such as Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, Philando Castile, Alton Sterling, Stephon Clark, Michael Brown, Laquan McDonald and so many more,<sup>33</sup> law enforcement officials have been working hard to improve community relations, hold accountable officers who engage in misconduct, and enforce de-escalation tactics.<sup>34</sup> Deputy Shelby, by refocusing the narrative around the impact her killing of Mr. Crutcher had on her, is doing just the opposite.

### III. Conclusion

For the reasons stated above, we call on SEHIA, an association that prides itself on helping community members and victims of homicide, to rescind the invitation to Deputy Betty Shelby, Deputy David Shelby, and Sergeant David Walker. Instead, SEHIA, its speakers, members, sponsors, and partners should highlight officers and civilians who recognize the value of human life, think critically, and attempt to deescalate situations, with a goal of preventing homicides, especially when perpetrated by police, in communities of color.

Thank you for considering our request. Please do not hesitate to contact Sherrilyn A. Ifill at 202-682-1300 or Gideon T. Carter, III at 225-214-1546 with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely yours,



Sherrilyn A. Ifill  
President and Director Counsel  
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Monique Dixon  
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Gideon T. Carter, III, Esq.  
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Rev. Joey and Mrs. Leanna Crutcher  
Parents of Mr. Crutcher  
New Heights Christian Center, Tulsa

Dr. Tiffany Crutcher, President  
Crutcher Foundation and Mr.  
Crutcher's twin sister

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<sup>32</sup> See Corey Jones and Curtis Killman, *Black people arrested about twice as much as other races, analysis of Tulsa Police data shows*, Tulsa World, Jun. 5, 2017, [https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/crimewatch/black-people-arrested-about-twice-as-much-as-other-races/article\\_4b564e68-eb76-5059-9198-969de8eb71dd.html](https://www.tulsaworld.com/news/crimewatch/black-people-arrested-about-twice-as-much-as-other-races/article_4b564e68-eb76-5059-9198-969de8eb71dd.html); see also City of Tulsa, et al, *Tulsa Equality Indicators, Annual Report 2018*, 24-26 (Apr. 4, 2018) (finding that, in Tulsa, Black residents are arrested over twice as often as White residents, and Blacks are five times as likely to be victims of officer use of force than all other racial and ethnic groups) [https://www.tulsaei.org/webdocs/Tulsa\\_Equality\\_Indicators\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2018\\_Web.pdf](https://www.tulsaei.org/webdocs/Tulsa_Equality_Indicators_Annual_Report_2018_Web.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> Jacqueline Howard, *Black men nearly 3 times as likely to die from police use of force, study says*, CNN, Dec. 20, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/2016/12/20/health/black-men-killed-by-police/index.html>.

<sup>34</sup> See, e.g., Daniel Hernandez, *How one of the deadliest police forces in America stopped shooting people*, Quartz, Dec. 4, 2015, <https://qz.com/565011/how-one-of-the-largest-police-forces-in-america-stopped-shooting-people/>; Christopher Haugh, *How the Dallas Police Department Reformed Itself*, The Atlantic, Jul. 9, 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/dallas-police/490583/>; Report: Seattle police reform big success, Use-of-force curbs haven't led to more crime, cops' injuries, Associated Press (April 6, 2017), <https://www.columbian.com/news/2017/apr/06/report-seattle-police-reform-big-success/>.

Drew Diamond, Former Chief of Police  
Tulsa Police Department

Vanessa Hall-Harper, Councilor, City  
of Tulsa, District One

Michael R.D. Adams, Brandon J. DeCuir,  
and L. Chris Stewart  
(attorneys for the children of Alton Sterling)

Rep. Regina Goodwin  
Oklahoma State Representative

Rep. Monroe Nichols,  
Oklahoma State Representative

State Sen. Kevin Matthews  
Oklahoma, District 11

**Additional Surviving Families of Police Killings:**

Families United for Justice (FU4J), including:

- Gwen Carr, mother of Eric Garner
  
- Cephus X Johnson (Uncle Bobby) and Beatrice X Johnson, uncle and aunt of Oscar Grant
  
- Victor Dempsey and Victoria Davis, siblings of Delrawn Small
  
- Krystal Brown and family, wife and family of Marlon Brown
  
- Katrina Johnson and family, cousin and family of Charleena Lyles
  
- Yolanda McNair, mother of Adaisha Miller
  
- Earl Lewis Jr., cousin of William Chapman II
  
- Jeralyn Blueford, mother of Alan Blueford
  
- Montye Benjamin, mother of Jayvis Benjamin

Families Overcoming Injustice (families and community members who have lost loved ones at the hands of the New Orleans Police Department)

**Baton Rouge Clergy:**

Pastor Fred Jeff Smith  
Shiloh Baptist Church

Pastor Errol Keith Domingue  
Elm Grove Baptist Church

Pastor Tommie Gipson  
Donaldson Chapel Baptist Church

Pastor Angela Lee Domingue  
New Canaan Baptist Church

Rev. Jennifer Jones  
Minister of Social Justice Issues & Executive Director,  
Shiloh Charitable Foundation

Rev. Demetria Jones-Smith,  
Minister of Christian Education &  
Youth, Shiloh Missionary Baptist

Pastor Dale Flowers  
New Sunlight Baptist & Redwood Baptist Churches

cc: Sharon Weston Broome, Mayor-President of Baton Rouge  
Scott Wilson, President Pro-tempore of Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council  
Murphy J. Paul, Jr., Baton Rouge Chief of Police  
Adam Knapp, President and CEO of Baton Rouge Area Chamber  
C. Denise Marcelle, Louisiana State Representative  
Lamont Cole, District 7 Councilman Baton Rouge Metropolitan Council and former President  
of NAACP Baton Rouge branch  
Damario Solomon-Simmons, Esq., attorney for the Crutcher family  
Together Baton Rouge

SEHIA sponsors and partners:

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Pennsylvania Homicide Investigators Association  
Robbery Investigators of Texas  
Texas Forensic Associates  
Virginia Homicide Investigators Association  
Washington Homicide Investigators Association  
Wisconsin Association of Homicide Investigator