

Seattle
Community
Police Commission

January 31, 2023

Via Email

Vickie Terry; Executive Director of NAACP Memphis Branch
588 Vance Ave
Memphis, TN 38126

Dear Ms. Terry,

The Seattle Community Police Commission wishes to extend its heartfelt condolences to the NAACP Memphis Branch, the Nichols family and the citizens of Memphis in the wake of the horrific violence perpetrated on Tyre Nichols by local law enforcement officers.

The brutal beating of a young Black man following a routine traffic stop, captured in agonizing detail in multiple videos, is appalling to witness. There remain unanswered questions regarding exactly what happened on the evening of January 7, but it is clear that the vicious abuse meted out to Mr. Nichols represents a shameful perversion of the fundamental principles of policing.

Memphis authorities are to be commended for promptly firing and criminally charging the five officers who took turns beating Mr. Nichols. But this tragedy – along with so many others across America – highlights serious systemic deficiencies in the way police officers are recruited, trained and supervised. It is always shocking to see how those charged with upholding the law can treat another human being with so little regard.

We in Seattle have confronted many of these same problems in recent years and embarked on an ambitious police reform process. While we have achieved some important successes, it is clear that transforming the culture and practice of law enforcement culture requires sustained commitment and patient persistence.

We stand in solidarity with all those across the country demanding greater accountability and transparency on the part of our law enforcement officers, who have a sacred duty to protect, not punish, the citizens they serve. We support your continued efforts to ensure sane, humane policing in your community.

Today, however, our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Nichols' family and the entire city of Memphis. May his memory inspire all those dedicated to creating an equitable and just society for all.

Sincerely,



Reverend Patricia Hunter,
Co-Chair



Reverend Harriett Walden,
Co-Chair



Joel Merkel, Co-Chair