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**STATEMENT OF PASADENANS ORGANIZING FOR PROGRESS (POP!) ON THE
RESIGNATION OF POLICE CHIEF PHILLIP SANCHEZ**

The most important goal of the next police chief will be to establish trust with Pasadena residents, and the community should have a say on who will take on this important job.

Pasadena, CA. In light of Pasadena Police Chief Phillip Sanchez's resignation, Pasadenans Organizing for Progress (POP!) calls on the City to engage the public in an open and transparent process to select the new leader for the city's police department. As this matter will undoubtedly impact Pasadena greatly, POP! urges City Manager Steve Mermell to work with stakeholders in the identification of skills and qualities needed in the next Chief of Police, as well as gather constituent input during the selection process. Those called upon in this joint effort should include: the local branches of the NAACP and ACLU, the Coalition for Increased Oversight of the Pasadena Police (CICOPP), POP!, and many others.

"During his tenure as the leader of Pasadena Police Department, we worked with Chief Sanchez on many important issues and we commend him for being accessible to the community," said Juliana Serrano, a member of POP!'s Executive Committee. "While the department has faced many challenges, we recognize that it does many things right. However, there is much room for improvement. POP! believes that more can be done to become the department that truly serves Pasadena's diverse community."

Misconduct by police is a nationwide problem and Pasadena is no exception. It cannot be fixed simply by replacing police chiefs. It requires changing the relationship between the police and the community. The most important goal of the next police chief will be to establish trust with Pasadena residents, especially African American and Latino residents who have been the victims of racial profiling, excessive force, and other police practices that undermine healthy police-community relations.

The most egregious recent example is the beating of Christopher Ballew by two patrol officers in Altadena on November 9, 2017.

"Allowing those police officers to remain on patrol while an investigation was pending aggravated public distrust of the department" said Kimberly Douglas, POP! co-chair. It was only after community groups -- including CICOPP, NAACP, ACLU, Pasadenans and Altadenans Against Police Violence, Indivisible Alta-Pasadena, Neighbors Building A Better Altadena,

CLUE, and POP! -- demanded that these two officers be removed from the streets that Chief Sanchez finally assigned them to desk duty. However, the beating of Mr. Ballew was only the latest incident that strained the trust between the PPD and the community.

Many grassroots groups have pushed the Mayor, City Council, City Manager, and Chief Sanchez to make the PPD more accountable to the public and to address chronic problems of police-community relations.

“We were successful in getting the PPD to end its cooperation with federal immigration agents that could lead to the deportation of innocent Pasadena residents, but it should not have taken such a sustained community organizing effort to pressure a reluctant City Council and City Manager to adopt these policies” said Pablo Alvarado, POP! co-chair and Executive Director of the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, one of the leading organizations fighting for immigrant rights.

Every effort to reform the PPD has taken a sustained organizing effort by community groups, including recently getting the City to pledge to collect racial and demographic data on every police interaction with the community, three years before it is required to do so under new state law –the Racial Identity and Profiling Act (RIPA). Early implementation of RIPA will help systemically identify the magnitude of racial profiling in the City of Pasadena.

The resignation of Chief Sanchez is no guarantee that the crisis afflicting the PPD will be resolved. The intransigence of the Department has several sources. One is a City Council and City leaders who have shown little interest and leadership in making much needed changes and have instead dug in their heels in defense of status quo policies and performance. Another is the opposition of the Pasadena Police Officers Association to every meaningful reform proposal.

“Most Pasadena police officers are responsible public servants. They deserve decent pay, working conditions, and ongoing training” said Ed Washatka, a POP! executive committee member and a graduate of the department’s Community Police Academy program. “The leadership of their union has often been an obstacle to reform, overzealously defending the bad practices of those officers who violate the public trust.”

The next Pasadena police chief needs to be someone who is willing to work with and listen to the community. Now more than ever we need local leadership to do more to protect human rights, civil rights, and immigrant rights, as our Federal government seems to be doing everything it can to undermine those rights.

But we cannot put our faith in a single individual, regardless of how responsible and committed he or she is to addressing the concerns of the Pasadena community. POP! and others will remain focused on our goals of police reform that includes but is not limited to, increased training and the hiring of an independent police auditor, to ensure that police are accountable to the city’s residents. POP! looks forward to the opportunity to work with Interim Chief John Perez.

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