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CITY OF MANCHESTER *Police Department*

July 22, 2020

To: The Governor's Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability, Community, and Transparency

From: Lieutenant Matthew Larochelle
Manchester Police Department

Re: Public Testimony Regarding Juvenile Arrests in the City of Manchester

Dear Commission members,

The intent of my letter is to simply clarify some misinformation that was given last week during the July 16th testimony regarding the arrest of juveniles and children by the Manchester Police Department. Specifically, comments made by Attorney Julian Jefferson which insinuated that the Manchester Police Department routinely arrests and charges young children. To clarify the assertion made that "Children as young as 10, 11, and 12 are constantly being arrested by police officers," I will provide the accurate data which was gathered earlier this week by MPD crime analysts.

In the past 5 ½ years (January 01, 2015 – present), the Manchester Police Department has brought forth charges against a total of fourteen (14) juveniles, age 12 and under, for Felony level offenses. Of those 14 felony level cases, only 2 of those children were actually physically brought into the police department. This was due to a combination of contributing factors, to include weapons used, their continued violence toward officers and/or a victim, or other circumstances. The remaining twelve were petitioned to court through the standard procedure of an officer or detective completing juvenile petitions and serving the parent/guardian with said Juvenile Petition to accompany the juvenile to court at a future date.

During the same timeframe from 2015 to present, 104 12-year-old juveniles were petitioned to court for CHINS or misdemeanor level offenses. It should be noted that over 25 percent of these were CHINS related matters which involved NO charges. Additionally, only a fraction of these juveniles were actually detained, arrested, or brought to the police department. Most were released to a parent/guardian and later petitioned to court.

The statements made implying that officers of our department constantly arrest children as young as 10, 11, and 12 is simply misleading and non-factual. We do in fact petition juveniles to court, but it is done so in a manner consistent with department policies, state law, and after exhausting all other options under the practices of Juvenile Diversion.

Michael L. Briggs Public Safety Building
405 Valley Street • Manchester, New Hampshire 03103 • (603) 668-8711 • FAX: (603) 668-8941
E-mail: ManchesterPD@manchesternh.gov • Website: www.manchesterpd.com

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In addition to Attorney Jefferson's false claim about the Manchester Police Department arresting children, he goes on to talk about a motion he had filed with the courts last week, which he would provide to the commission. He stated that he represented "a black student who punched a white student in the face after he called him the N word and was then prosecuted for Felony Riot." Again, this statement is only partially factual and absent of many details surrounding the incident he is referring to. Without detailing the full circumstances of this incident due to the sensitive nature of the facts as well as the juveniles involved, I will again clarify that these charges were brought forth as a result of a large "brawl" style fight in the cafeteria of a Manchester high school. The incident involved more than 9 individuals actively fighting while approximately 225-250 students were present and affected. The situation required the response of a School Resource Officer along with more than 8 additional patrol officers to respond and assist due to the violent nature of the incident. Furthermore, as with other cases previously mentioned, none of the individual students involved in the fight were physically arrested, but were rather Petitioned to juvenile court through paperwork service, requiring the accompaniment of the parent or guardian's presence at a later date. One student was arrested and charged with offenses after a physical confrontation with an officer, causing injury to that officer.

Additionally, there has been discussion surrounding School Resource Officers (SRO's) and their value to both the school and community. In the city of Manchester, we staff nine (9) SRO's who are part of each High School and Middle School Community. Their primary role within the school is to provide safety and security to the students, faculty, and surrounding neighborhoods. Additionally, they enforce laws and investigate crimes which may occur within or around a school, which may affect the health and safety of students and/or faculty. They also assist school administration, when necessary, with school investigations to ensure the safety of the student body. Most importantly, the Manchester PD School Resource Officers take great pride in being part of their school family. They participate in programs both within the school and after school hours, often on their own time. They develop relationships with students and staff that are not only invaluable to the safety of the school, but crucial in the development and success of the students. I would be happy to discuss programs which are utilized for healthy relationships between the police and youth, such as the Mirror Project, LEAD training, and our ACERT (Adverse Childhood Experience Response Team) program.

In closing, I want to reiterate my respect and appreciation for this commission and its members, as well as its goals and the task in front of you. I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the fact that there is always room for improvement within our profession. However, if there is going to be open dialogue and conversation between those who are seated at the table, it should be clear, accurate, and factually based.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,



Lieutenant Matthew J. Larochelle
Investigative Division
Juvenile Investigative Unit / Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit
Manchester Police Department
(603) 792-5563
mlaroch@manchesternh.gov

Michael L. Briggs Public Safety Building
405 Valley Street • Manchester, New Hampshire 03103 • (603) 668-8711 • FAX: (603) 668-8941
E-mail: ManchesterPD@manchesternh.gov • Website: www.manchesterpd.com

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