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PRESS RELEASE

Chester County Law Enforcement Task Force on Race and Justice Created

The Chester County District Attorney's Office announces the formation of the Chester County Law Enforcement Task Force on Race and Justice. The task force will include members from the Fraternal Order of Police, the Chiefs of Police Association, the Pennsylvania State Police, the Sheriff's Department, the NAACP, community members, and others involved in the criminal justice system.

District Attorney Deb Ryan stated, "This task force will focus to improve relationships with and treatment of communities of color with law enforcement as well as criminal justice reform to ensure just outcomes for all people equally. We will work together to reexamine our policies and protocols and to review our training so that we can uncover and address problems with systemic racism in the criminal justice system. Our goal is to engage in open and honest dialogues with the community, and each other, to facilitate the best practices moving forward."

Specifically, the task force will review law enforcement policies and protocols throughout the county on the use of force, and work to provide and improve training on, among other things, de-escalation and implicit bias. Additionally, the task force will look at mechanisms to improve accountability at all levels and will review and examine hiring practices, including red flag reforms,

to improve transparency. Finally, the task force will study and review legislation proposed on policing reforms.

Law enforcement has already begun dialogues with community members on these topics and will continue to engage in community outreach indefinitely throughout the county.

Additionally, the District Attorney's Office has created its own internal Racial and Ethnic Diversity Workgroup that consists of several subcommittees on training, community outreach and criminal justice reform. The office will also implement conviction integrity review of cases where there is a claim of true innocence.

“This is only a first step and we recognize that many stakeholders must be involved if we want to effectuate real change. Our hope is that by listening to members of the community and discussing their concerns we can create actionable items to improve our system. This will take time, but we are committed to continuing our efforts to make improvements to ensure justice for all.” Ryan said.

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Approved for release:

Deborah Ryan
District Attorney