



## Police Department

June 3, 2020

To our Community,

Last Friday I described my shock at the disturbing video depicting the horrific death of Mr. George Floyd. His senseless death at the hands of Minneapolis police officers continues to weigh on my heart. It shocks our collective conscience and offends the most basic tenants of our humanity. I am deeply saddened by the preventable loss of life, disgusted at the callous manner of those who failed to act when they were sworn to do so, frustrated that we have yet to rise beyond systemic cultural fear and division, and compelled to act to ensure our society does better.

The behavior captured on video is entirely inconsistent with professional police training, legitimate tactics, and even the most basic expectations for the profession that I have spent 28 years trying to improve. We extend our condolences and deepest sympathies to the Floyd family, to all those who share in the anger and frustration about such senseless violence and death, and to communities affected by such abhorrent behavior.

But I am also encouraged by the men and women of the Chula Vista Police Department. In the days since Mr. Floyd's death I have had long conversations with many of our officers. In each and every case, I have been impressed by their unanimous condemnation of the offensive actions that took place in Minneapolis. I have been concerned for their safety as they continue to serve our community faithfully in the face of overwhelming acts of destruction occurring across the nation. And I have been proud of their resilience, and their passion for all that is honorable and good in our public safety profession.

As our founding fathers suggested, authority to govern exists only with the consent of the governed. Our organization's culture is one that embraces mutual respect for human life of all people, and the power of diversity. We recruit and hire officers that we hold to the highest possible expectations of our community and of our profession. My leadership team works to foster a culture of listening to the expression of our community. Our officers serve our residents according to our community's expectations and needs.

Neither the Chula Vista Police Department nor its officers tolerate unnecessary, inappropriate or excessive force. My officers are trained and expected to intervene to prevent unprofessional acts, and are required to report misconduct immediately. Every day, Chula Vista officers work tirelessly with few resources to protect our community. They do so with training that far exceeds legal requirements, and that includes progressive courses focused not only on life safety and policing tactics, but also on de-escalation, implicit bias, ethical policing, procedural justice, and community policing.

I am honored to represent the Chula Vista Police Department and the collection of dedicated, caring and compassionate people that keep us safe every day.

I also want to acknowledge the pain and anger expressed by those engaged in peaceful protests and by those who feel marginalized and voiceless. Our community understands that the vast majority of protests are comprised of peaceful people. While often spirited and emotional, there is a message in the energy of protests to which we, members of a fair and just society, must listen.

It is the sworn duty of the law enforcement profession to protect and support the right of peaceful expression, and defend those expressing it, even where the message is directed at law enforcement itself. But it is critical to recognize the difference between lawful protests and criminal acts. It is also our duty to defend our community from destructive behavior and victimization. Acts that are criminal, riotous or assaultive are not legal expressions of free speech and will not be tolerated in our community. Our department will respond in a measured and appropriate manner wherever criminal acts occur.

I ask our community to come together in unity to care for each other, and to work with us to ensure that all persons feel safe and justly treated. Let us make Chula Vista a shining example of what can happen when police and the community work together in partnership.

Roxana Kennedy  
Chief of Police