Jewish Federation
OF ST.JOSEPH VALLEY

president Lisa Lerman *z'l*
executive director Moshe Kruger

June 4, 2020

The Honorable James Mueller
Mayor, City of South Bend

Dear Mayor Mueller,

As leaders of local Jewish organizations that are concerned with justice and fair treatment for all, and with support from our partners in this initiative (indicated below), we are writing in regard to the brutal murder of George Floyd by a Minneapolis Police officer. In South Bend, too, there is a history of police abuse and violence against Black and Brown people. We are reaching out to urge you to take immediate action to implement substantive law enforcement reforms so that all residents of South Bend can feel safe in their interaction with police officers.

While we have no doubt that the great majority of the men and women of the South Bend Police Department are sincerely dedicated to protecting the citizens of South Bend, we urge you to immediately take the following steps as preventative measures:

• Adopt a police discipline matrix -- a clear list of violations and consequences, with increasingly serious consequences for repeat violations -- as presented to the Board of Public Safety incorporating improvements suggested by Faith in Indiana and others in the community.

• Remove unfair contract protections which undermine the process to remove officers whose actions pose a danger to public safety.

• Provide anti-bias training for all South Bend Police officers. (The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) is available to provide such training).

• Provide use-of-force training for South Bend Police officers that emphasizes de-escalation tactics and Procedural Justice Training (community based "customer service" training)

• Review and strengthen the use-of-force policy in line with national best practices to emphasize de-escalation and to clearly define what is and is not appropriate use of force (e.g. a knee on the neck can never be an appropriate use-of-force).

Had these practices and procedures been in place in the Minneapolis Police Department, we have no doubt that George Floyd would be alive today.

We would also note that the issues we are addressing are long-standing problems, not just the tragic death of one man in Minneapolis. The City of South Bend has the responsibility to ensure that all of our citizens- especially the African American citizens of our city and other citizens of color - feel safe and secure in the knowledge that our police officers have the level of accountability and standards of training that will prevent such a tragedy from happening in South Bend in the future.

Thank you for your consideration and for your efforts in working towards a safer and more civil city for all its citizens. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these proposals in person.

Sincerely,

Marzy Bauer, Chairperson, Tzedek Seekers of Temple Beth-El

Rabbi Karen Companez, Temple Beth-El

Bob Feferman, Community Relations Director, The Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley

Rabbi Michael Friedland, Sinai Synagogue

Rowan Kelly, Director, Jewish Family Services, the Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley

Moshe Kruger, Executive Director, The Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley

Barbara Lerman, Chairperson, Community Relations Committee, The Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley

Michael A. Patton, MNA, President, South Bend Branch NAACP

Robert E Smith, President, Martin Luther King Jr. Senior Men's Club, Inc.

Rev. Gilbert Washington, clergy co-chair, Faith in Indiana, St. Joseph County Chapter