



November 11, 2014

To local, state and federal government officials:

A grand jury will soon announce its decision regarding the fatal police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

Whether the decision be an indictment or non-indictment, this much is clear: no one wishes to see a repeat of the tragedy that took place last summer. Nor does any reasonable person wish to see the kind of response that only leads to escalated violence and increased harm to life and property. We must create conditions where people can assemble, as is their constitutional right, in a manner that is civil and peaceful for all involved, including residents and officers entrusted with maintaining safety.

The undersigned are members and allies of the Executives' Alliance to Expand Opportunities for Boys and Men of Color. Launched in April 2013, the Alliance is a growing network comprised of the presidents and CEOs of national, regional and community foundations that engage in a broad array of initiatives and activities to support boys and men of color, ranging from individual programmatic interventions to broad-scale policy change.

Members of the Executives' Alliance have worked closely with the leaders and member organizations of the movement for justice in Ferguson. Those organizations follow in the footsteps of other great Americans; civil rights patriots who secured rightful freedoms that were long denied. They have engaged leaders from across the nation and the world. They have set forth well-reasoned reform proposals to improve how we manage future situations at the local, state, and federal level. The Executives' Alliance applauds their efforts and will continue to stand with them.

Like many around the world, we watched Ferguson this past August when a tragic killing sparked an equally unnecessary and disproportionate police response. And like many around the world, we will watch again when the grand jury announces its pending decision. We expect our fellow Americans will be safe to exercise their lawful rights in the public square of Ferguson and the greater St. Louis area.

With this open letter, we implore law enforcement, legislative, judiciary and other officials at the local, state and federal levels to take direct measures that will allow demonstrations to occur in the safest manner possible.

Our recommendations (which echo those from a longer list created by grassroots organizations in Greater St. Louis) are as follows:

- Preserve human life as the first priority for all concerned.
- Provide the community with advance notice before the grand jury decision is announced.
- Avoid tactics and equipment that unduly militarize the police force: this includes use of armored vehicles, rubber bullets, rifles and tear gas.
- Communicate with protesters in order to reach common-sense agreements for the protocols that all must follow.
- Allow every latitude for free assembly and expression – treat protesters engaged in appropriate acts of civil disobedience as civilians, not as enemy combatants.
- Make every effort to pinpoint and arrest only individual lawbreakers, and avoid mass arrests of innocent protesters and bystanders.
- Provide the public with advance information on both the chain of command within and across all participating law enforcement agencies and the rules for how decisions will be made about whether to escalate their response.

We, the undersigned, make these recommendations in appreciation of the efforts already underway to bring peace, justice and order to Ferguson and other communities across the country that may have a public reaction to the grand jury decision. And we trust that leaders at all levels and within all branches of government will heed our call to let our children see — let the world see — that new hope and new healing can begin here.

Regards,

La June Montgomery Tabron, President and CEO, W.K. Kellogg Foundation  
 Leticia Peguero, Executive Director, Andrus Family Fund  
 Patrick McCarthy, President and CEO, Annie E. Casey Foundation  
 Kevin Jennings, Executive Director, Arcus Foundation  
 Peggy Saika, President & Executive Director, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy  
 Susan Taylor Batten, Executive Director, Association of Black Foundation Executives  
 Martha Toll, Executive Director, Butler Family Fund  
 Antonia Hernández, President and CEO, California Community Foundation  
 Robert Ross, President and CEO, The California Endowment  
 William C. Bell, Ph.D., President and CEO, Casey Family Programs  
 Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, President and CEO, Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo  
 Sidney R. Hargo, Executive Director, Community Foundation of South Jersey  
 Yanique Redwood, President and CEO, Consumer Health Foundation  
 Rev. Starsky D. Wilson, President and CEO, Deaconess Foundation  
 Rahsaan Harris, PhD, Executive Director, Emerging Practitioners in Philanthropy  
 Ivey L. Allen, Ph. D., President, Foundation for the Mid South  
 Cedric Brown, Managing Partner, Kapor Center for Social Impact  
 Ben Hecht, President and CEO, Living Cities  
 Luz Vega-Marquis, President and CEO, Marguerite Casey Foundation  
 Sandra Mikush, Interim Executive Director, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

Carly Hare, Executive Director, Native Americans in Philanthropy  
Berta Colón, President, NEO Philanthropy  
Ken Zimmerman, Director of U.S. Programs, Open Society Foundations  
Mary E. McClymont, President, Public Welfare Foundation  
Timothy Silard, President, Rosenberg Foundation  
Fred Blackwell, Chief Executive Officer, The San Francisco Foundation  
Dr. John H. Jackson, President and CEO, Schott Foundation for Public Education  
Chet P. Hewitt, President & CEO, Sierra Health Foundation  
Tonya Allen, President and CEO, The Skillman Foundation  
Kent McGuire, President and CEO, Southern Education Foundation  
Kriss Deiglmeier, Chief Executive Officer, Tides