



Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Mayor Jones and Councilmembers of Garden Grove
11222 Acacia Pkwy
Garden Grove, CA 92840

RE: Garden Grove Needs to Reallocate Funding from Police to Invest in Local Communities, and Support Affirmative Action

Dear Mayor Steve Jones and Councilmembers of Garden Grove,

VietRISE unequivocally supports the Garden Grove High School Black Student Union's [call](#) to reallocate \$30 million of Garden Grove's police budget to support local businesses, low income families, health services, housing and education. We urge the city to proactively enact policy to make Black communities and all marginalized communities in Garden Grove feel safer by defunding the police department's current funding allocation in the proposed 2020-2021 FY budget and reallocating it to other community services that will directly benefit and improve the lives of residents.

Our organization is committed to dismantling systems of white supremacy and ending the criminalization of immigrants. Local policing and law enforcement are often the first point of contact where immigrants are sent to the prison-to-deportation pipeline, and Black immigrants constitute 20% of those facing deportation despite making up only 7% of non-citizens in the U.S., according to the [State of Black Immigrants report](#). Garden Grove police has its [own history](#) of harming residents, through racial profiling, aggressive and violent practices, and abuse of power through city-funded equipment and technology.

In order for our communities to feel safe and restore public trust in government, the city must take action to codify protections for the wellbeing of their residents. Currently, the city of Garden Grove faces a budget deficit while residents continue to experience health and economic hardship due to COVID-19. According to the [GGHS BSU's petition](#),

"Each year, the city of Garden Grove continues to increase its spending on the police budget by millions, while decreasing the money directly spent on community services. Over a two-year period of increased funding, the Garden Grove police's use of force incidentally increased by an unacceptable 250%. The city has already projected a budget deficit of \$5.2 million for FY 2020-21. During this period of financial uncertainty, we cannot provide more funds to the police department when small businesses and families are vulnerable."



Defunding the police department and reinvesting money into community services is one of many steps that local elected officials should take to address systemic violence against Black communities. This is an opportunity for Garden Grove to be part of that change. We urge you to agendize the immediate revision of the Community Services and Community and Economic Development budget to absorb funds from the Police Department budget to reinvest in our communities through education, health, housing, and small business services for the 2020-2021 FY budget.

Lastly, on the topic of affirmative action: according to disaggregated data provided by Asian Americans Advancing Justice in their [Southeast Asian American Journeys Report](#) (2020), Vietnamese students and families would benefit greatly from affirmative action. 43% of Vietnamese residents in California have a high school diploma, 30% have a BA or higher, 20% are low-income and/or experiencing poverty, and 50% have limited-English proficiency, the highest in the state of CA. Furthermore, the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996 harmed women and communities of color the most for the past two decades. For example, Black and Latino students admitted to the University of California decreased between 12 and 60 percent since it passed, and women in California make on average 80 cents for every dollar a man is paid; for women of color and single moms, that amount decreases to 60 cents per dollar.

Not only will affirmative action benefit Vietnamese students and families, it will benefit and help improve the lives of Black, Latino, Indigenous, and other Southeast Asian communities by preventing discrimination and ensuring quality of opportunity in California. **Therefore, as Vietnamese community members we also urge you to support affirmative action across the state.**

If you would like to contact me, I can be reached by email at tracy@vietrise.org.

Sincerely,

Tracy La
Executive Director, VietRISE