Alexandria Democratic Committee Resolution to Support the Alexandria Police Department's ongoing Data Transparency Efforts by Urging the City Council to Pass a Public Safety Ordinance

A RESOLUTION urging that the City Council pass an ordinance requiring the Alexandria Police Department (APD) to improve their data collection for investigative stops, crimes and arrests by including the disaggregated demographic elements of race, ethnicity, age, gender, disability status, and English-proficiency, and to make this data publicly available in a report released on a quarterly basis, in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

WHEREAS, the goal of the APD's Strategic Response System initiative is to use sophisticated and ongoing crime analysis data to respond proactively and effectively to new and emerging crime trends by increasing the integration of crime analysis into the decision-making process so that policing strategies and deployment are unified, consistent, fact based and effective to reduce crime and respond to neighborhood issues.[1]

WHEREAS, it is urgent in the current national climate that the APD keep with best practices and be able to publicly show citizens through data and facts that their policing techniques are effective, fair, and in keeping with highest standards of public service.

WHEREAS, some cities in Virginia—such as Bedford, Danville, Hampton, and Newport News[2] —have recently begun to improve their data collection and reporting systems. The District of Columbia[3] and Illinois[4] recently passed laws requiring improved data collection and reporting.

WHEREAS, the APD is already required by law[5] to "establish… a uniform crime reporting system for the purpose of receiving, compiling, classifying, analyzing, and publishing crime statistics of offenses known, persons arrested, and persons charged."

WHEREAS, we expect transparency and accountability from our local government, public schools and other public institutions and should expect no less from our police department and the sharing of data helps build community trust and legitimacy of our institutions.

WHEREAS, we commend the APD for its work with George Mason University[6] and other public institutions as a first step to improving and ensuring fair methods of data collection and reporting, and look forward to the additional steps that APD will take for community engagement and collaboration as a result of the ordinance.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Alexandria Democratic Committee urges that the City Council pass an ordinance requiring the APD to improve data collection and its reporting system for investigative stops, crimes and arrests data by expanding the disaggregated demographic elements of race, ethnicity, age, gender, disability status, and English-proficiency, and to make this data available to the public in a report and released on at least a quarterly basis, in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

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[1] Strategic Response System (SRS) https://www.alexandriava.gov/police/info/default.aspx?id=9232
[2] White House Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Launching the Police Data Initiative
https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2015/05/18/launching-police-data-initiative
[3] 63 D.C. Reg. 4659 (April 1, 2016)
[4] Traffic and Pedestrian Stop Statistical Study, 625 ILCS 5/11-212 (2016)
[5] Uniform Crime Reporting Program. Virginia Code. https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacodefull/title52/chapter6/
[6] Community Advisory Team and Traffic Citation Analysis
https://www.alexandriava.gov/police/info/default.aspx?id=98011