



ICMS #: 2020-0962

June 10, 2020

**Complaint:** The Office of Police Oversight received the following email from the 131 signed complainants listed below:

“Dear Austin’s Elected Officials and Leaders,

A message from [REDACTED] Classmates:

[REDACTED], who is starting his junior year this upcoming fall in KIPP Austin Brave High School, is just like any other teenagers. He recently turned 16 on May 26th and was excited to begin working at Jersey Mikes. With the money he earned, he wanted to save up to buy his first car, all alone without the help of others. He always talked about wanting to drive his car all around Austin playing his favorite music - DJ Screw, Dr .Octagon, Eminem, Pink Floyd and The Killers. [REDACTED] is the student and classmate that truly stands out from everyone else. Since middle school, he was known to be a free thinker. Always opinionated, independent, extremely intelligent. He loved to have discussions with teachers whenever his beliefs were different from the ones our teachers had. That is the [REDACTED] we know, the [REDACTED] we grew up with and love. A person, not just a name appearing on TV and social media. He is a friend and classmate, a person who has feelings, opinions, and rights just like everyone else in this country. [REDACTED] is a victim of police brutality in Austin, Texas.

Anger, frustration and disbelief. These were only 3 of the many emotions we felt when we found out our fellow classmate was now one of the many people who have gotten injured for being present at what was supposed to be a “peaceful protest.” Many people, his classmates like us included, have yet to process their emotions about the whole situation. We feel powerless. There is no justification for harming someone who was not acting violent. Why does this senseless violence by the police continue? Why can’t people be compassionate towards people of color? They’re just fighting for their right to LIVE. Is that so bad? It is no secret people of color have been seen as “threats” to the police force for many years, but especially now, many people of color claim to be scared to step out of their homes because they will not come back due to the increase of police brutality. There are parents teaching their children of color what to do in case they encounter a police officer. They are told to keep their hands in eyesight and not to run. But why should any kid be told they have to protect themselves from the police? The police force is supposed to be here to “protect and serve us,” but it feels as if they are against us, their community. Everybody has the freedom of expression, the right to peaceful assembly, and the ability to petition the government, but many people in the Austin community and nationwide prefer to remain silent and stay away from protests, due to numerous incidents like [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was glad to be working, happy to be independent, like any other 16 year old would be. Like us. Like your sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, or grandchildren. He wasn’t even protesting, yet he still got shot. He was observing the crowd. He was not a threat to an officer’s safety, yet they shot him. This is unjustifiable. This is police brutality, one of the many diseases in America. We just hoped it would

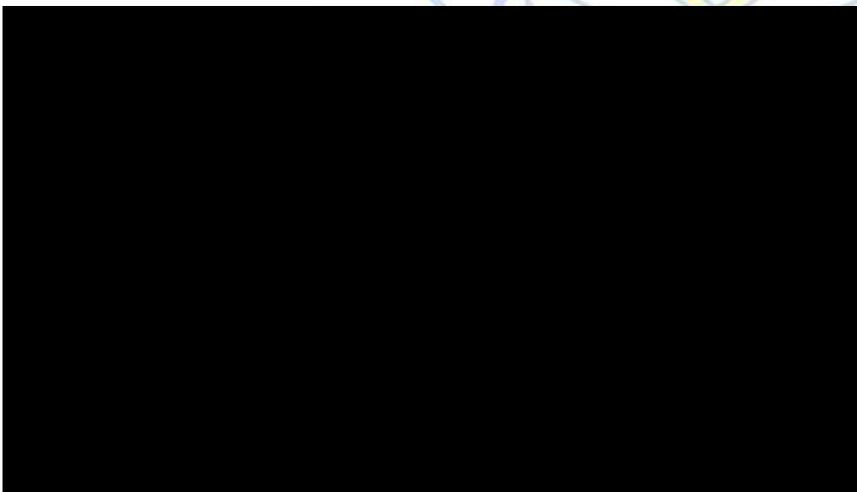


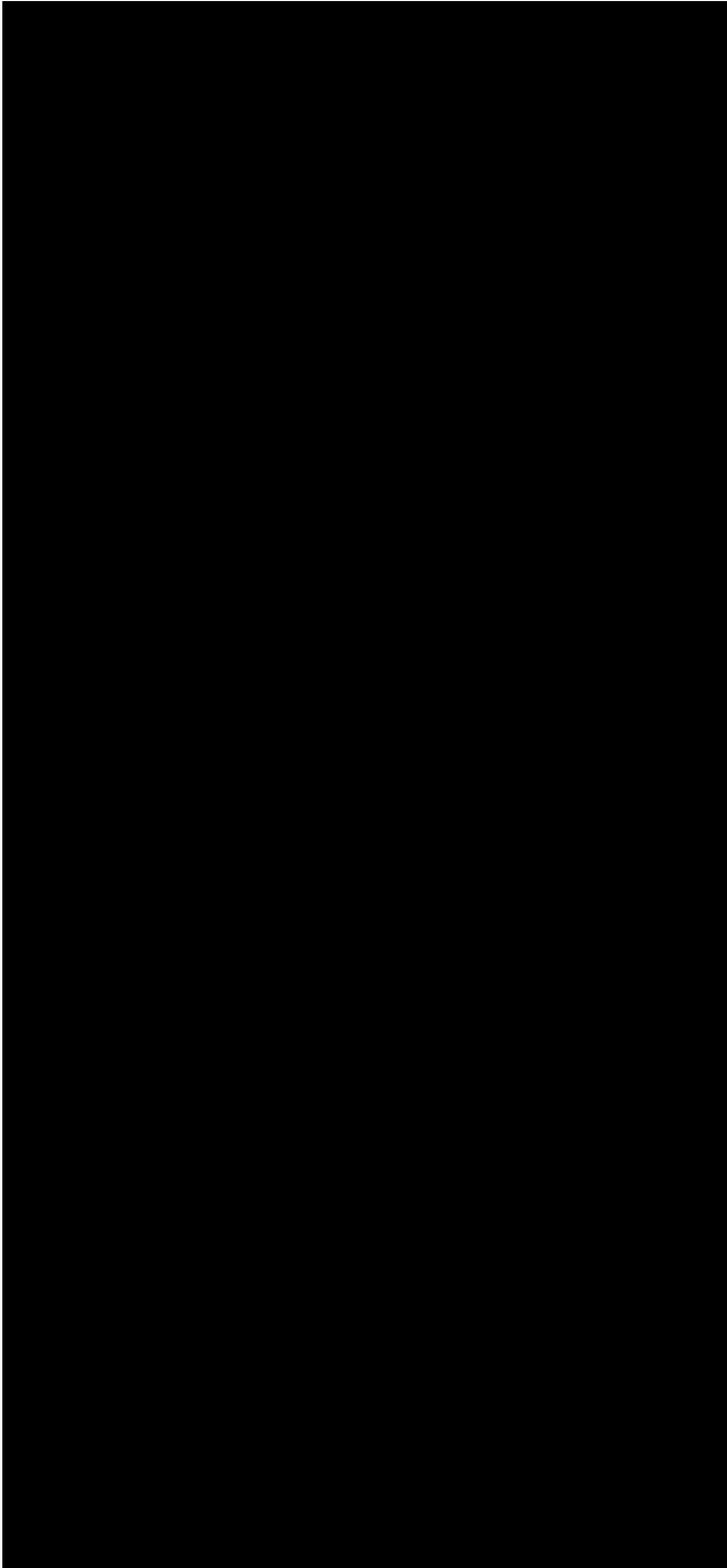
never reach our community, but it did. And what difference would it make if he was protesting? Would he still have been a target? This was a peaceful protest.

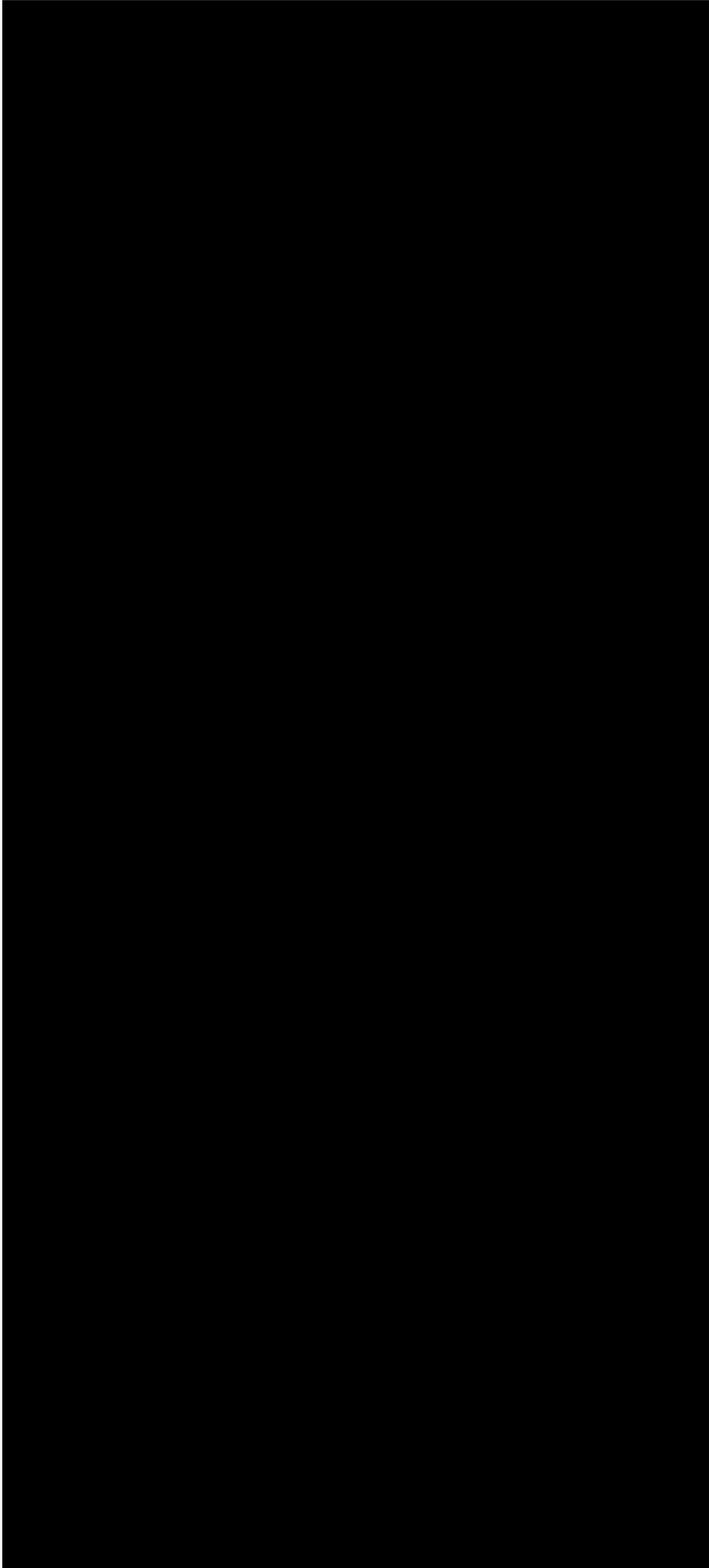
Throughout the last couple of days, we have seen our nation confront the issue of police brutality, flooding social media and the news. Like many Americans, however, it's hard to understand the effect of police brutality until it touches your own community. The majority of us were not affected until [REDACTED] became a victim of it. We want justice for [REDACTED], and responsibility to be taken fairly and collectively. As a community, we have compiled a list of actions to seek justice. First, the officer, or officers, who shot [REDACTED] must be held accountable for their actions. In order to hold officers accountable, we believe APD should terminate their role as an officer, and the District Attorney's office should press appropriate charges. Secondly, moving forward, for the sake of the community, using weapons such as: bean bags, projectiles, or rubber bullets, should be eliminated. If this protocol was already in place, people like [REDACTED], who are standing innocently, away from the crowd, would have never been brutally injured. Lastly, we hope that police officers are trained to attend to public safety, rather than police with violent authority. If the Austin Police Department wants reform, they must no longer act as paramilitary enforcers, instead they must seek to help and heal. It is painful for us to keep seeing our peers seriously injured, then left unattended.

As students, as community members, and as humans, we demand responsibility for these inhumane actions. The goal of our propositions in the letter are for people and students like us not to be fearful in the presence of police officers. [REDACTED] story was one of the many regarding police brutality, and we want to bring progress to all affected and demand change. We, the community, demand and expect that police officers keep us safe instead of harming innocent people. We are tired of seeing our peers be brutally injured by officers, who claim to be protecting us. If you, our leaders, don't make those changes, who will?"

Student Signatures:

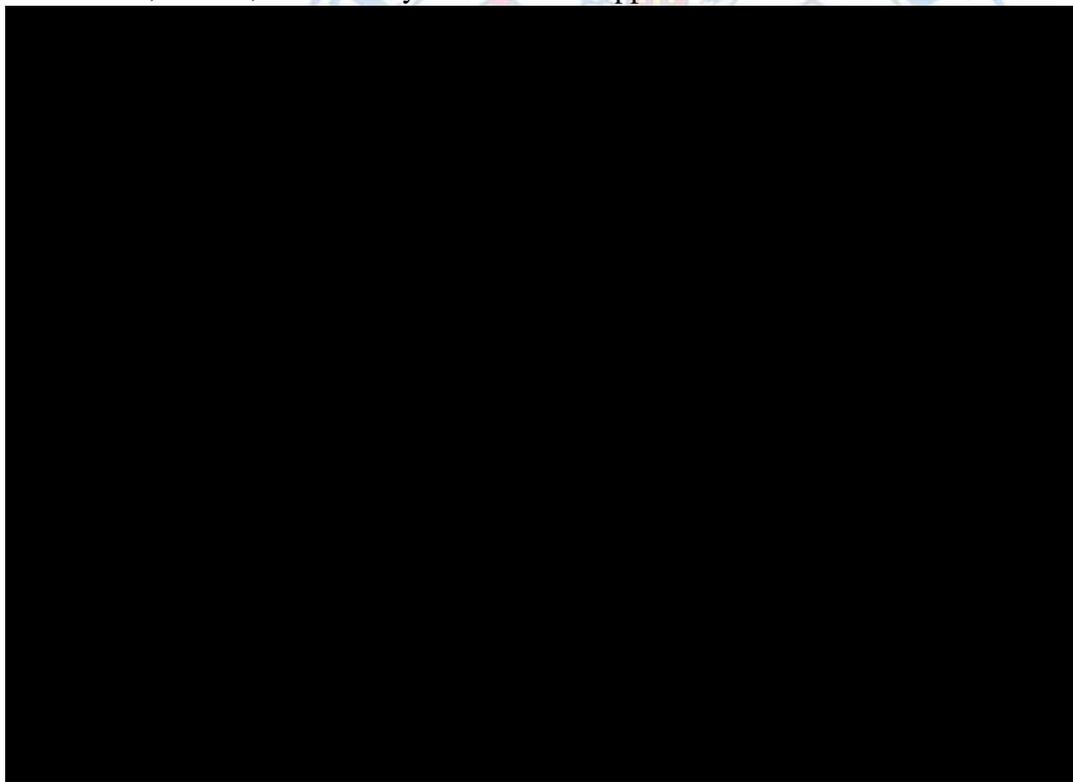








Teachers, Adults, Community Members in support:



*This notice of formal complaint is a request for Internal Affairs to initiate an investigation in order to determine if the employee conduct is within compliance of APD policy, Civil Service Rules, and Municipal Civil Service Rules.*

**Recommended Administrative Policies to Review (to include but not limited to):**

The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the American Disabilities Act. Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request.