

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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**STATEMENT FROM ARLINGTON NAACP ON**

**FINDINGS OF ARLINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION IN THE JONATHAN PAUL CASE**

We are encouraged by the latest administrative actions; the proposed firings by the Arlington Police Department.

However we are also disappointed that indictments had to be returned in order for the Arlington Police Department to provide a more truthful picture of the events from that evening.

It is unacceptable that it took nine months and two indictments for the Department to decide to take disciplinary measures against the jailers who are responsible for the unjustifiable death of an unarmed and defenseless inmate already securely in their custody.

It is certainly different from the rhetoric APD used early on in this investigation in justifying why the employees involved were not placed on leave.

It is also unclear as to why Sgt. Frank Vacante was merely suspended rather than terminated, like Wes Allen, Matt Fisher, and Pedro Medina. The Arlington Branch of NAACP continues to request an open dialogue with the Department re: the findings of their internal investigation, and the rationale behind their disciplinary decisions, as we have been requesting since March 2015.

Collaborative problem-solving and necessary dialogue about the Paul Case is imperative in order to examine and improve APD’s protocols, the needed policy changes and to strengthen employee training in order to avoid situations that include excessive use of force, managing those with medical issues up to and including people who suffer with mental illness. The NAACP enjoys an interactive relationship with the Arlington Police Department. We expect to build upon that relationship to include developing solutions to problems in an effort to increase trust in police.

We recognize that there is always a potential for employee misconduct to occur and when incidents occur the community should expect a response that reflects transparency and a willingness to correct the behavior and provide the appropriate punishment in a timely manner.

We will also push the department and Chief Johnson for changes that provide true transparency when incidents like this occur.

Notwithstanding these concerns, we recognize that yesterday's disciplinary measures are an additional step toward justice for the Paul family, and will continue to support them through the prosecution of Pedro Medina and Steve Schmidt.

