



City of Tacoma

Mayor Victoria Woodards

June 4, 2020

Honorable Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

This week, we learned more sad and disturbing news. We learned that the cause of death of Manny Ellis, who died while in the custody of our police department on March 3rd, was determined by the Medical Examiner to be "Hypoxia due to physical restraint" and the manner of death to be "Homicide." While this matter is still under investigation, these findings are extremely distressing and present many critical questions that demand answers. We cannot imagine the grief and hardship that it has caused for his friends and family.

We watched the Ellis family deliver a powerful message in their June 4th news conference. We heard their call for a thorough and independent investigation and their desire to involve the State of Washington in ensuring it. We also heard that their desire to see action taken, and their moving appeal to speak about their loved one's life and their death while in police custody with humanity and truth.

We deeply appreciate that you reached out to our City personally on the day that this news was released and that you share our desire for a full and complete investigation into the death of Manny Ellis. Nothing less is acceptable. Together, we must make sure the outcomes of this case tell the truth.

African American residents across our City and our Nation know that losses of life in police custody are a traumatic but common occurrence. To have lasting change – to try to ensure that other families will not experience a tragedy like this – we must reform our justice system's standards, policies and procedures. We appreciate the commitments you've made to equity. We appreciate your time and look forward to

hearing from you about how the community can be assured of a fair process and how to forge lasting change.

Sincerely,

Mayor Victoria Woodards

Council Member Chris Beale – Position 5

Deputy Mayor Keith Blocker – Position 3

Council Member Lillian Hunter – Position 6

Council Member John Hines – Position 1

Council Member Conor McCarthy – Position 7

Council Member Robert Thoms – Position 2

Council Member Kristina Walker – Position 8

Council Member Catherine Ushka – Position 4

CC: The Honorable Laurie Jenkins, Speaker of the House
 The Honorable Jeannie Darnielle, 27th LD State Senator
 The Honorable Jake Fey, 27th LD State Representative
 The Honorable Steve O'Ban, 28th LD State Senator
 The Honorable Christine Kilduff, 28th LD State Representative
 The Honorable Mari Leavitt, 28th LD State Representative
 The Honorable Steve Conway, 29th LD State Senator
 The Honorable Steve Kirby, 29th State Representative
 The Honorable Melanie Morgan, 29th LD State Representative