

## **Statement by the League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad Regarding the Death of Marcus Deon Smith While in Police Custody**

Because the League of Women Voters of the Piedmont Triad (LWVPT) works for “open, accountable, representative and responsive government at every level,” we are very disturbed by the events of September 8, 2018 in which Marcus Deon Smith, apparently in the throes of a mental health crisis, died under questionable circumstances while in police custody. Of particular concern is the great discrepancy in the information contained in the police account as reported in the News & Record on September 10, and the subsequent report of those same events by Mr. Smith’s father and his attorney Graham Holt after they viewed them on police body camera footage.

The LWVPT, therefore, supports the 4 requests made in the letter to the Greensboro City Council from Marcus Hyde of the Homeless Union of Greensboro on behalf of a coalition of signatories to the letter, of which we are one. We concur completely with these 4 points urging the members of the City Council to fulfill their responsibilities by: viewing all footage of the events, taking all possible action to ensure that Council members are not prevented from speaking about what they see in that footage, seeking to have the footage released to the public, and taking any possible action warranted by what they see in the footage.

This case cries out for a public explanation of police behavior as it relates to training in best practices, standard departmental procedures, and the overall preparedness of the Greensboro Police Department (GPD) for dealing with the mentally ill. In the absence of a thorough and transparent investigation, citizens can have no confidence that justice has been served for Marcus, his family and the GPD. A Greensboro City Council that does not insist upon the transparency that alone can assure the accountability of City employees when dealing with the public calls into question its legitimacy as representatives of all our citizens.

