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August 4, 2020

Roger Goodell
Commissioner
National Football League
280 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10017

RE: Inspire Change: Stephon Clark's Legacy | #EveryonesChild

Dear Commissioner Goodell:

The men and women of the California District Attorneys Association applaud your *Inspire Change* initiative. We are aligned with your aspirational goals of creating positive movement in communities across our nation, amplifying the voices of those traditionally marginalized and ensuring that equity becomes a reality for all.

Those goals, however, are accomplished only through frank and honest conversation, an unwavering commitment to facts and relentless self-assessment and accountability in how we are perceived in our communities. This includes you and your organization.

To that end, we must take issue with the video recently released by the NFL entitled *Stephon Clark's Legacy | #EveryonesChild*. The video clearly and poignantly shows the devastating impact Mr. Clark's death had on his mother. The pride she has for her son and the loss she is suffering is profound and moving. If the enormity of her grief alone was the content of the video or the purpose behind the NFL campaign, you would not be hearing from us.

However, the video misrepresents the facts of this tragic incident. In March 2019, the Sacramento District Attorney's Office and the California Attorney General's Office released their independent findings involving the circumstances that led to the tragic death of Stephon Clark.

We encourage you and your organization to review these findings at:

[Sacramento County District Attorney's Stephon Clark Officer-Involved Shooting Review Reports/Videos](#)

[Attorney General's Stephon Clark Officer-Involved Shooting Review Press Conference](#)

Among the findings of the investigations, was the fact that less than 48 hours prior to the events that took his life, Mr. Clark was involved in a domestic

violence incident with the mother of his children rendering him suicidal. Helicopter footage and other physical evidence established that Mr. Clark committed several crimes including car burglary, vandalism and an attempted residential burglary. Mr. Clark was running from officers when he entered the backyard of his Grandmother and took a shooting stance and advanced on officers who believed he had a gun. These findings were supported by the helicopter video and body worn cameras. Officers were unaware that Mr. Clark was in the backyard of his family member. The autopsy of Mr. Clark revealed that he was under the influence of multiple drugs at the time of his death.

Laying out the facts surrounding Mr. Clark's tragic final moments are not made in disrespect for his life. Rather, they are a testament to the tragedy of his circumstances and those faced by our communities.

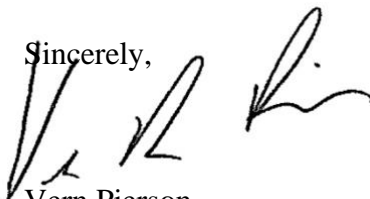
By omitting these critical facts, you missed the opportunity to address issues faced by our communities including those surrounding drug addiction, mental health struggles, and domestic violence. You fail to address the preceding events that put the actions taken by Mr. Clark and the police into context. You fail to account for the dilemmas faced by officers with suicidal subjects and subjects acting under the influence of narcotics. And by failing to account for the full set of circumstances surrounding his death, you are undermining the very foundation of meaningful conversation around unlawful police overreach, brutality and wrongdoing or the meaningful reallocation of financial resources to community interventions for underserved populations such as those in mental health crisis. You are undermining our ability to speak candidly about the problems that ravage our communities that demand real solutions.

If any of us are going to do better, we have to face the realities of our collective situation. Recently, in speaking about the power of honesty and evidence, President Obama said, *"Speak the truth. Speak it clearly. Speak it with compassion. Speak it with empathy for what folks are going through. The biggest mistake any [of] us can make in these situations is to misinform"*

All of us can and should speak about the loss of Stephon Clark with empathy and compassion. But we must also speak about it truthfully. We would respectfully ask that you reexamine the factual findings of Stephon Clark's death and produce a video that accurately depicts the conduct of all concerned in an officer involved shooting. Sadly, there are far too many to choose from that better illuminate just how far we must go in reaching the lofty ideals we cherish and venerate as a nation.

CDAА stands ready to assist in your worthy *Inspire Change* initiative. We're ready to have open and candid conversations about police misconduct, racial injustice, poverty, drug addiction, mental health struggles, domestic violence and suicide prevention. We hope the NFL is, too.

Sincerely,



Vern Pierson

El Dorado County District Attorney
2020-21 CDAА President