

# Austin Neighborhoods Council

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Post Office Box 176 • Austin, Texas 78767

2 April 2010

Mayor Leffingwell, Mayor Pro Tem and Council Members,

The Austin Neighborhoods Council (ANC), an umbrella organization that includes neighborhood associations throughout Austin, adopted at its March 24 general meeting the following resolution regarding application of a "Preservation of Life Standard" (See accompanying explanation) in the use of force by the Austin Police Department.

## **Resolution Concerning Austin Police use of Arbitrary and Excessive force**

**Whereas**, there is a well-documented and long history of the use of excessive force on people of color by the Austin Police Department; and

**Whereas**, current APD use of force policy primarily protects aggressive police behavior and allows the police officer broad discretion in using deadly force; and

**Whereas**, investigations by the Austin Police Department and District Attorney's office has historically shown bias in favor of police officers and has not reduced unnecessary deadly incidents;

**Be It Resolved**, that the Austin Neighborhood Council calls on the City Council, City Manager, and Austin Police Chief to adopt a stricter "**Preservation of Life Standard**" on use of force, modeled after the Dallas, Houston and Los Angeles use-of-force standards.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Cory Walton, President,  
Austin Neighborhoods Council

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## **Preservation of Life Standard for Use of Force**

*The most restrictive deadly-force standard is the "Preservation of Life Standard" as adopted by the Dallas and Houston (Texas) Police Department (among others).*

*The "preservation of life standard" states that, "regardless of the nature of the crime or the justification for firing at a suspect, officers must remember that their basic responsibility is to protect life. Officers shall not fire under conditions that would unnecessarily subject bystanders or hostages to death or possible injury, except to preserve life or to prevent serious bodily injury. Deadly force is an act of last resort and will be used only when other reasonable alternatives are impracticable or fail." Further, the "preservation of life standard" requires that, "officers will plan ahead and consider alternatives which will reduce the possibility of needing to use deadly force)."*

*It is the position of the Austin Neighborhood Council that, implementation of a "preservation of life standard"; aggressive recruitment of a diverse applicant pool from our area schools; rigorous training on interacting with the mentally ill; and confronting racial and cultural bias in policing will reduce incidents of excessive force in our community.*