

## Statement Supporting Substitute Amendment 4287

June 7, 2016

The League of Women Voters—Dane County supported the original resolution establishing the Madison Police Department Policy and Procedure Review Ad Hoc Committee. That resolution appropriated \$50,000 for the committee to issue an RFP.

The initial resolution directed that areas to be reviewed include racial disparity, use of force, dealing with people with mental health problems, and disproportionate contact with youth of color. As the committee has worked with the volunteer Community Response Team it has become clear that a review which adequately addresses those issues will cost a great deal more than \$50,000.

The League believes that an RFP which addresses these issues will provide insights and recommendations that will assist our community in revising police policies and procedures to reduce the chance of inappropriate use of deadly force and racial disparity in police contacts, and to assist the police in strengthening the trust of minority communities.

Concerns have been raised about the cost of obtaining a comprehensive review by qualified experts. There is a significant cost in **not** doing such a review.

Last year, the City paid \$300,000 as its deductible in a \$2.3 million settlement of the death of Paul Heenan, an unarmed man shot by a Madison police officer. A settlement of that size implies that some improvements could be made to police policies and procedures.

If the city had undertaken such a study soon after Heenan's death, we might know the experience in departments that allow lone officers to use tasers against unarmed suspects.

We might have learned how other departments deal in a timely and successful way with officers involved in excessive use-of-force

settlements (the city had paid a prior settlement involving the officer who subsequently shot Heenan.)

We might know whether our officers have the best training in how to de-escalate situations before force is a necessary option. And our minority residents, and the many others who share their concerns, might have more confidence in our police department.

Let's not wait for another tragedy to undertake a quality, useful study by a nationally-recognized research group. We can't afford anything less.