



Los Angeles County

# Commission on Human Relations

Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services  
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## RESOLUTION ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1992 RODNEY KING UPRISING

### L.A. COUNTY COMMISSION ON HUMAN RELATIONS

Whereas this year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of what has been referenced in different ways as the Los Angeles Rodney King Uprising/Riots/Rebellion/Civil Unrest, which, by any name, is undeniably one of the most significant events in Los Angeles' and the nation's history and which holds valuable lessons and reminders of the human rights, intergroup relations, and police-community relations work that still demands our attention;

Whereas, on March 3, 1991, KTLA TV aired a clip of a video shot by amateur cameraman George Holliday from the balcony of his San Fernando Valley apartment showing a group of Los Angeles Police Department officers repeatedly striking a man (who was later identified as Rodney King) with batons and kicking him while other officers watch;

Whereas, on April 29, 1992, the criminal trial in state court of the four officers charged with assault and use of excessive force in connection with the arrest and beating of Rodney King ended without a conviction, with the jury acquitting all on the assault charge and acquitting three and deadlocking for one officer on the excessive force charge;

Whereas, following the announcement of the verdicts, residents of all races and backgrounds in Los Angeles expressed outrage at protests at LAPD headquarters Parker Center, the intersection of Florence and Normandie in South L.A., and at peaceful marches in downtown L.A. the following day;

Whereas, months earlier, tensions between the African American and Korean American communities had been heightened following the trial of Soon Ja Du, a Korean American shop owner accused of shooting Latasha Harlins, an African American girl, in the back, which resulted in a manslaughter conviction;

Whereas, after more than 3 hours of angry protests and violence at Florence and Normandie, TV news cameras televised truck driver Reginald Denny being dragged from his cab and beaten nearly to death with a tire iron, a fire extinguisher and a brick; Denny was rescued by four strangers who emerged from the crowd and took him to safety; in the days that followed, Fidel Lopez and several other people were victims of apparent hate-motivated attacks in the South LA area;

Whereas these and other contributing factors, including decades of societal discrimination, especially in the criminal justice systems, neglect felt by the African American community, and mutual cultural misunderstandings in the African American and Korean American communities, led to heightened

tensions and the explosion of violence and targeting of Korean and Asian-owned businesses in South L.A. on April 29, 1992, and the days that followed;

Whereas there was looting and arson of stores in the south and central parts of Los Angeles, which had a devastating impact on Korean, African American, and Latino communities and business owners;

Whereas L.A. City Mayor Tom Bradley imposed a citywide curfew that lasted until May 3<sup>rd</sup>, and Governor Wilson declared a state of emergency early on the morning of April 30, 1992;

Whereas, by May 1, 1992, 30,000 uniformed personnel, including police officers, deputy sheriffs, the California National Guard, U.S. Army soldiers, Marines and specially trained federal law-enforcement officers were mobilized;

Whereas, on May 2, 1992, an estimated 30,000 people marched for racial healing and in support of beleaguered merchants in Koreatown;

Whereas, when the violence largely ceased on May 4, 1992, 53 people had lost their lives, 2,400 were injured and 12,000 were arrested, and an estimated \$1 billion in property damage from fires, theft, and vandalism had occurred;

Whereas all communities suffered profound loss; the Korean American community was greatly impacted, with approximately half of the \$1 billion in losses;

Whereas, on August 4, 1993, LAPD officer Laurence M. Powell and Sgt. Stacey C. Koon were convicted in a federal trial for violating Rodney King's civil rights, resulting in a sentence of 2 1/2 years in federal prison, far less than requested by prosecutors;

Whereas, since 1992, Los Angeles has rebuilt and continued to grow into one of the most diverse regions in the country, with over 220 languages spoken by residents, hailing from more than 140 countries;

Whereas, in the ensuing 25 years, many individuals and organizations, including the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, the Anti-Defamation League, the Korean American Coalition, and the Los Angeles Urban League have worked individually and in coalition to build bridges of understanding among our many diverse communities and to reduce hatred and stereotyping of the communities we represent;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that we commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the 1992 LA Rodney King Uprising in the following ways:

- Remembering Rodney King, who passed away on June 17, 2012, at the age of 47;
- Honoring those people who lost their lives as we pay respect to their families;
- Recognizing those who lost their property and livelihoods, honoring their efforts to rebuild;
- Commending the work of many individuals and organizations, along with the County and City of Los Angeles and their human relations commissions, to rebuild and heal our communities in the last 25 years;

- Participating in 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary events which help to tell the stories reflecting the different experiences of communities so as to promote mutual understanding and stronger intergroup relations in Los Angeles;
- Supporting all efforts of government and community to prevent recent federal immigration actions from continuing to damage the ability of millions of Los Angeles immigrant residents' ability to trust sheriff's deputies, LAPD and local police, making our communities less safe for everyone;
- Seeking the input of communities, law enforcement, and other stakeholders in the changes still needed to have stronger trust and communication between communities and police through the Commission's Policing and Human Relations Project hearings process;
- Noting the persistent and growing socio-economic and racial/ethnic disparities in our country that continues to contribute to the polarization of our communities;
- Committing to work together to create a harmonious diverse community of inclusion, equity and peace that recognizes we are a country built by forced (slaves) and voluntary immigrants and Native Americans and their descendants;
- Resolving to stand up to bigotry, hate and xenophobia in our community through our commission's youth human relations leadership development initiative, and our L.A. County Network Against Hate Crime (NAHC), monitoring of hate activity, and calling for increased reporting by all the affected communities;
- Denouncing hate crimes of all kinds via our NAHC because a hate crime targeting one segment of our community does harm to us all;
- Working together with mutual respect and accountability to continue to promote high standards of community policing, including reporting and assisting in the fight against hate and extremism;
- Pledging that we will teach our young people and remind one another of human relations principles and skills, including that diversity is a strength and a source of pride, not a cause for hatred and division, through our Youth Human Relations Leadership Development programs.

Approved by the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations on April 3, 2017.

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