

August 21, 2014  
Office of the President of Texas Southern University  
Texas Southern University Board of Regents  
Texas Southern University  
3100 Cleburne Houston, TX 77004

Dear Dr. John Rudley, Texas Southern University President & Texas Southern University Board of Regents:

We, Texas Southern University Police Officers, Telecommunication Specialist, and Sergeants have composed this letter to express our dissatisfaction with Texas Southern University Executive Director/Chief of Police, Roger Byars. This Letter is an expression of our vote of no confidence in Chief Byars when it comes to demonstrating honesty, integrity, and respect for police department employees. Under Chief Byars' leadership the police department has steadily deteriorated in terms of morale, performance, direction, vision and most damaging the perception of the department's integrity. We feel the damage is such that is not repairable under Chief Byars' leadership.

This Vote of No-Confidence is an alternative method to bring forth serious concerns of public safety and mismanagement to you while still promoting uninterrupted and dedicated service because we understand our services are vital to the welfare and public safety of the university. Furthermore, it is not our wish to bring reproach or embarrassment to the police department or university. This is why we have chosen to not make this issue public. Based on our vote of no confidence we are asking that Chief Byars be removed from the position of Chief of Texas Southern University Police Department.

Since his arrival as the department's Chief of Police, Chief Byars has continuously created unwarranted and sometimes avoidable hardship to the personnel within department. It has been made clear to us that Chief Byars' sole purpose and desire is to promote himself at the expense of his degenerating staff. Chief Byars has fabricated, mislead, and sometimes used intimidation as managerial practices. For example, when Chief Byars first arrived to Texas Southern University he held one-on-one interviews with most department employees. During his interviews he stated that he was only conducting a "department survey," and had no intention of becoming the police chief. This information was unsolicited. Approximately one week later he

officially was announced as the police chief. Thus, Chief Byars began his service with the university under dishonesty. Since that time there have been department members who have been disciplined and terminated for "Untruthfulness."

Under Chief Byars' leadership he has failed to provide up-to-date equipment and tools for officers in the field. Over the years officers and sergeants have conducted research and made recommendations to the executive leadership concerning the need to update equipment to stay within reason of industry standards and failing to meet this demand places officers in a higher risk for injury. Additionally, officers are less prepared to provide efficient and speedy service to the university. Chief Byars elects to spend department funds on toys and projects that he identifies as "flying the flag." However, it has been over two years since the department has purchased replacement uniforms for officers. Our dispatch area is the sole source of communication and our equipment is so outdated they we can no longer communicate with the surrounding agencies if needed. Communicating between dispatch and on duty officers is spotty a lot of the times the transmission has static. A month ago officers received new radios that were out dated to the industry and the communication between officer and dispatch was still not clear and spotty.

As the university's first responders, training is as important to officers as being properly equipped. The threat of an active shooter on campus is feared nationally. The threat is real and it is paramount that all school districts and universities are prepared for such threats. At this time our department is not equipped or properly trained to respond to such threats. We have certified trainers internally that are being utilized by neighboring agencies such as University of Houston, but we currently do not have unified training for our officers. We also do not have specialized units or tactical squads that are specially trained to handle such threat if presented. In order to get additional training officers must make their own efforts outside of the department. There have also been incidents when Chief Byars disapproved training request from officers, even when they attempted to pay for the training themselves.

Chief Byars' poor judgment is the cause for the department's high retention rate. First, we are losing experienced and trained officers and supervisors who have formed positive bonds with fellow department members, and most importantly, community members. These officers are leaving because salaries of department staff members are well below the market rate. Officers are faced with the decision of working in a community they love, or going to a department that

pays a competitive salary and uses modern equipment. This brings the morale down amongst the officers who are currently employed. It is also added stress on the remaining first line supervisors whose job is to motivate and develop their subordinates and try to maintain a positive work environment.

Chief Byars' leadership has resulted in a police department viewed as poorly equipped, and under trained which has a negative image among the law enforcement community. This is evident by viewing the limited number of applicants for open positions in the department. Right now the department has approximately six (6) open police positions and at least (1) sergeant position posted. As of August 14, 2014 there have been zero (0) applications submitted seeking to fill those openings. Furthermore, with experienced officers leaving we have no quality contenders to fill the sergeant position. Considering the overall state of the economy, and the high increase of cadets entering and graduating from surrounding area academies, the Office of Human Resources should have an abundance of applicants seeking employment as a police officer. Overall, we are not marketable as a police department.

Now we are faced with beginning the fall semester with limited staff. The fall semester is the busiest time of year for the university. There are sporting events, on-campus special events, and extracurricular activities such as Homecoming. This does not account for the safety needs of student housing. The level of stress and responsibility placed on the officers remaining with the department is insurmountable. We are set up to fail. The most disheartening factor is that we will assume all of the blame when a complaint is filed concerning the poor performance of the police department.

Lastly, as a group we understand President Rudley's support of the police department. The safety of Texas Southern University students, faculty and staff is a priority of him. However, it is not President Rudley's responsibility to oversee the day to day operations of the police department. He must rely on information, education, and recommendations provided to him by Chief Byars. We believe that information provided to President Rudley by Chief Byars is manipulated to give a false perception that the police department is functioning at a high capacity. Hopefully this letter will open the door to President Rudley learning the truth.

In conclusion, it is unfortunate that we are involved in this process. Again, we want to reiterate that we wish for this process to remain internal at this time to protect the image of the university and the police department. We are vested in this community and take pride in the

growth and success of the university. Nevertheless our statement is clear; we all are requesting that Chief Roger Byars be removed as chief of police immediately. This university deserves better, and you have dedicated staff members who need adequate leadership.

Sincerely yours,

Texas Southern University Police Department Staff