Title: Addressing the Justice System and Law Enforcement

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Problem To Be Addressed:
We ask for the continuation of the NAD Justice priority from 2018 with the addition of these two specific focuses, all through an intersectional, racial justice lens:

• Police brutality
• Communication with law enforcement, especially as it pertains to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic

Proposed Solution:
• NAD to collaborate with Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) organizations to identify models of programs and services that can do a better job than the police.
• Develop a draft bill to be used on the national level, as well as for states to implement in their local/state levels regarding communication from the police to Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind persons, especially given the recent increase in police brutality as a result of miscommunication, racial bias, and other social justice factors.
• Establish a national database or registry using a driver’s license/government identification as a means to flag a Deaf person in law enforcement systems.
• NAD to develop a nationalized standard training curriculum for law enforcement.
• Changes to law enforcement ticketing systems to use visual icons as well as written language.

Rationale:
It is essential to address the issues including Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the racial system to ensure and support a radical justice system. In addition to the existing systemic racism and audism, COVID-19 has created an additional communication barrier with the widespread use of face masks. The Deaf/Hard of Hearing/DeafBlind communities have been significantly impacted by this. With law enforcement and the use of face masks, there is a higher risk for miscommunication.

Fiscal Impact:
Potential costs of developing training materials, public advocacy materials, or curriculums. Potential costs of hiring qualified BIPOC subject matter experts to develop the above.

NAD HQ/Board Response:
The NAD supports this priority, which would be a continuation of the current priority on addressing how law enforcement interacts with deaf and hard of hearing persons. The NAD is actively working with NASADHH as well as stakeholder groups such as NBDA to develop guidelines on how to do the advocacy work, as well as develop a position statement, which will incorporate racial injustice issues. The work focuses not just on training but transforming how law enforcement responds to any issues involving deaf and hard of hearing, and will develop a national model even though the current law enforcement system is localized and does not report to a federal agency. While law enforcement does not follow any national standards (each local agency has its own training program), we are nevertheless working on a nationalized training curriculum and hope to promote it to all local law enforcement agencies.
While the NAD supports the overall priority, a national database or registry is not recommended primarily due to privacy concerns, but also because many deaf and hard of hearing individuals do not want to be identified in this way.