

August 9, 1968

FROM: Mayor Cavanagh

TO: Commissioner Johannes Spreen  
Police Department

Prior to your appointment, we had embarked on a major recruiting effort with two objectives. First, to dramatically increase the number of black officers on the force from slightly below 6% to at least 10 to 12%. And, second, to bring the Police Department up to strength as quickly as possible.

This program has been successful in that we have already hired more Negro officers in the first seven months of this year than we had in the entire 12 months of last year. However, the program has from the start lacked the cooperation and support of those in charge of the recruiting system. In fact, without the constant and direct intervention of this office, we would not have achieved the results that we have.

I had reached an agreement with Commissioner Girardin and Director of Personnel Robert Quaid that the class which began July 8 would be 50% Negro and 50% white. We had also agreed that the classes of July 22 and August 5 would be 25 black officers and 15 white. This agreement has been subverted by the personnel office. While the July 8 class was 50 - 50, the July 22 class and the August 5 class evidenced a return to "business as usual" and a flagrant disregard for my instructions. My staff, for example, had been assured that the July 22 class consisted of 22 black officers and 13 white. We were further assured as late as Friday, August 2 that the August 5 class was 24 black and 16 white. It was not until August 5 that we learned the truth and, by subsequent investigation, learned that the orders which Commissioner Girardin and I had given were not being followed.

This issue is far too important to the race relations in this City to allow it to be frustrated by the unconscionable disregard of my wishes by members of the Police Department. The situation is further aggravated by the fact that we are quickly approaching the authorized strength of the Police Department. While accurate information has been difficult to obtain, there appears to be only 202 vacancies on the force. With the present scheduling of classes and the pipeline candidates, this means that we would fill the Police Department within the next several months and most certainly before the end of this calendar year.

Therefore, in order to make absolutely sure that the objectives of this administration in recruiting black policemen are attained and are not subverted, the following policies with regard to recruitment are put into effect immediately:

1. For every one white candidate recruited, four black officers will be recruited. This policy will remain in effect until the police force reaches its authorized strength.
2. The discretionary policy of allowing the Department to put men on the payroll pending the start of a class is revoked. This policy rather than being used wisely has been used to hire white officers and then rationalizing their being put in the Academy by the fact that they are presently on the payroll.
3. Three working days prior to the beginning of any class at the Police Academy, the roster of students will be submitted to this office for verification of the availability of these men to start that particular class. No class will begin until the roster has been approved by this office.
4. Classes will be racially integrated in the same percentage as set forth in objective 1. In other words, until the Department is brought up to strength, any class, starting with the class of August 19, will consist of 32 black officers and 8 white.

In summary, the Police Department is more than any other agency in City government, the key to the safety and welfare of this City. I have pledged publicly on many occasions that we would strive to achieve a better racial balance on our police force. This objective has been accepted as a wise and prudent one by even the most militant persons of the right and the left. We cannot allow anyone to frustrate the attainment of this objective; and, while this policy may delay for a short time the attainment of a full strength Department, I would point out that the Department is functioning with almost 300 more officers than it had present for duty on December 31, 1967. And I would also point out that the attainment of these objectives by filling these last 200 positions wisely is far more important than the mere filling of the positions themselves.