Dear President Biden,

Alliance San Diego agrees with your view that we as a country must lead by the power of example. That is why we are doing our part to create an inclusive democracy that protects human rights without exception, exclusion, or excuse. We are your partners in change, and we call on you as president to do more to elevate, respect, and protect our human rights so all of us can participate with dignity in an inclusive democracy.

An important place to start is to address the ongoing human rights violations by federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies that disproportionately harm Black and Brown communities. These human rights violations stem directly from a use of force standard that is out of alignment with international standards and that dehumanizes people of color, leading to tragedies that deny our communities safety, dignity and justice.

It’s time to change the use of force standard from ‘reasonable’ to the international human rights standard of ‘necessary and proportionate’ already in place around the world. The low standard is at play in every tragedy, from the killing of Anastasio Hernandez Rojas by San Diego border agents to the recent killing of Tyre Nichols by Memphis police officers. Changing the standard changes the question — was the force necessary and proportionate? The heightened standard honors the dignity of life.

Human dignity is the point of a democracy. It is what inspired the Declaration of Independence, the notion that all of us are created equal with inalienable rights. The United States later led the world to proclaim the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which began, “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Mr. President, you can lead with the power of example by protecting those promised rights, beginning with changing the use of force standard.

Respectfully,

Alliance San Diego Board & Staff