Policing in Philadelphia

Crystal Williams-Coleman, president of the Guardian Civic League, says she thinks Black police officers “feel caught in the middle.” — TRIBUNE PHOTO/ABDUL R. SULAYMAN

Anton Moore, founder of the anti-gun violence group Unity in the Community, in South Philadelphia.

Michael D’Onofrio

TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

The unofficial start of summer weekend.

The summer also historically heralds a surge in gun violence on Philadelphia streets.

Philadelphia is already in the midst of a homicide high.

The police-in-a-funk narrative is being fed in part by the release of a body-worn camera video showing a Black man being tased.

Meanwhile, Williams-Coleman’s most immediate problems are that Black police are in a funk — reportedly, in worse funk than their white counterparts.

According to news outlets, Black officers oftentimes talk about two warring worlds — the world of the Black community and the world of the “blue” community — this second world including colleagues accused of wrongful killings of Blacks.

The unease has intensified in the wake of the high-profile police killings of African-American males (as well as some females) across the nation.

The police-involved deaths have included that of George Floyd, whose kills, Derek Chauvin, was found guilty last month and is reportedly due for sentencing June 25.

Questions about police use of deadly force have been spotlighted like never before.

“Cops are afraid now that if they shoot somebody it’s going to be bad (even worse than normal),” said one 31-year veteran officer, who preferred to remain anonymous.

The Black police officer, who used the pseudonym “Mary,” in an interview with The Philadelphia Tribune, said she was retiring in a month, not just because of police killings and unrest, but because of an accumula-

tion of issues, including the attitude of supervisors.

She confirmed that there was an over-

all morale problem and that questions over the use of deadly force were increasing among police.

Referring to questions about deadly force, Mary said officers — Black and white — feel they’re being judged and misjudged.

Floyd legislation reveals divide in national police-reform movement

People carry posters with George Floyd on them as they march from the Lincoln Memorial to the U.S. Capitol, in Washington on Aug. 28, 2020.

Aaron Morrison

Emmy Swanson

NEW YORK — Mona Bandle, an organizer with the Movement for Black Lives, a coalition of over 150 Black-led advocacy organizations that opposes the Floyd legislation because it does not go far enough to stop state police abuses, reflecting a divide within the movement over what would constitute real progress.

“We’ve come to realize over the past decades that it is police departments, with their oversized budgets and their outsized political power, are able to rise above reformist policies,” said Bandle, an organizer with the Movement for Black Lives, a coalition of over 150 Black-led advocacy organizations that opposes the Floyd legislation because it does not go far enough to stop state police abuses, reflecting a divide within the movement over what would constitute real progress.

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ers who are disciplined for serious mis-

conduct, among other proposals.

Although Bandle thinks the bill is well-meaning, now is not the time to settle for the same old ideas, she said.

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