

# NAACP leader says police used excessive force on sister

## Eugene incident under investigation

(AP) -- The president of an NAACP chapter contends Eugene police used excessive force on his sister after she tried to stop an officer from deploying a Taser on her 19-year-old son.

Eugene-Springfield NAACP President Eric Richardson said Ayisha Brown called a mental health service early July 16 because her son was having a psychotic breakdown. The assistance team could not respond, and police officers arrived.

Richardson, who said he witnessed the incident, said Brown hugged her agitated son to prevent an officer from using the stun gun.

An officer, who was white, threw Brown to the ground, put a knee in her back and arrested her, Richardson said. His sister, he said, suffered a concussion and has back and knee problems.

Richardson said he raised his hands and identified himself as the chapter president of the NAACP. He said the officers told him he was at risk of being tased.

"I asked everyone to calm down, and I don't believe my efforts were respected," he said.

Richardson said he has spoken with Police Chief Pete Kerns about the incident, and those talks have gone well. Richardson said his goals are to improve police training and transparency, while boosting resources for mental health.

"I want to be as positive as possible, while at the same time showing that I felt the whole situation that happened to my sister was un-



PHOTO BY RYAN KANG OF THE OREGON DAILY EMERALD  
Eugene NAACP President Eric Richardson addresses a rally for justice for Trayvon Martin in this archives photo from the civil rights group's website.

just," he said in a phone interview Tuesday.

According to a recording of a 911 call released by Eugene police, the son was yelling and swearing at Brown, did not recognize her as his mother and believed he was trapped inside the house. A second caller, who talked with Brown some time later, told dispatchers that the son was choking Brown.

When officers arrived at Brown's house, according to the police report, the son appeared agitated and stared at one of the officers with an angry expression. He

swore at the officer and repeatedly mumbled to him that he was not a real officer, according to the video released by the police. The report also says the son was crowding the officer and had nudged his shoulder twice with his hand.

Another officer then told the son to step back or he would get tased, and Brown wrapped her hands around her son and asked the officer not to tase him, according to the report. The officer asked her to step back, but she did not comply. When the son started "moving aggressively" toward the officer, he

eventually deployed the stun gun and handcuffed the son, according to the report.

Police and jail records obtained by The (Eugene) Register-Guard newspaper show Brown was

booked into jail on a misdemeanor charge of interfering with police. She was released the same day, and prosecutors declined to file formal charges.

Kerns told KLCC radio in an interview that the police officers "went there with the best of intentions, to help the mom and the 19-year-old son who were in need of emergency services."

"Responding to an incident, with a full-grown, strong, athletic man who is in a mental health break, and whose behavior is unpredictable, is a very, very difficult thing to do," he said.

Kerns also said he could understand why the mother did not want to let go of her son.

Although Kerns defended the police officers as doing the best they could to control things, he said it would be inappropriate to say whether they followed policy until an investigation is concluded.

Kerns also said he doesn't believe race was a factor.

He and Richardson, however, see eye-to-eye on the issue of mental health. "Our hope is that, together with NAACP and others, we can create greater mental health care capacity and better ways to care for people whose lives would benefit from those services," Kerns

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## Voting Rights Act Turns Fifty

### Secretary of State issues proclamation

Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne P. Atkins invited Oregonians to join her Thursday to commemorate the Voting Rights Act, 50 years to the day it was signed into law by President Johnson on Aug. 6, 1965.

The Act outlawed discriminatory voting practices, such as literacy tests and poll taxes, which were adopted by states after the Civil War to prevent African-Americans from registering and exercising their right to vote. It also established new legal protections for minority voters at the polls.

"At a time when politicians in many states around the country are acting to suppress the voting rights of minorities, youth and the



Jeanne P. Atkins

disadvantaged, Oregon stands out as a beacon of inclusiveness and fairness," Atkins said. "We are

working to make it even easier for Oregonians to become voters and cast their ballots."


Oregon has a long-standing tradition of ensuring voting is accessible, convenient, and secure. In 1998, Oregon led the nation with Vote-by-Mail system for all elections and became the national model for making voting as accessible as possible.

"Once again we are leading the nation with the Oregon Motor Voter Act" Atkins said. "This program will make it easier for every eligible Oregon citizen to be registered to vote."

As it was 50 years ago, and as it has been since the founding of our nation, "the fate of our democracy depends on preserving and upholding access to the ballot," Atkins said.

To learn more about registering to vote and casting a ballot in Oregon, visit OregonVotes.gov.

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