



# NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Councilmembers Announce Police Recruitment and Retention Action Plan** *Faulconer, Kersey, Zapf and Sherman call for quick action to ensure police recruits aren't lost to nearby agencies after San Diego taxpayers invest thousands of dollars*

San Diego – Today, Councilmembers Kevin Faulconer, Mark Kersey, Lorie Zapf and Scott Sherman unveiled an action plan to stem the tide of police officers leaving the San Diego Police Department. The announcement comes on the heels of the City Council approving \$2 million to address recruitment and retention problems in the SDPD

“Last week we secured a big win for San Diegans by passing a landmark five-year labor agreement that locks in voter-approved pension reform and prioritizes public safety officers,” said Councilmember Faulconer, noting the labor agreement created \$10 million in savings to allocate to the police department and other neighborhood services. “Now, we have the ability to take action to ensure we have competitive incentives for the hard working men and women of the San Diego Police Department to stay in San Diego.”

The Councilmembers said they are seeking immediate action to let San Diego police officers know the City is committed to finding a solution to the retention problem. They requested the Council President schedule a budget hearing before the Council’s August recess to start putting a performance-based police retention plan into action.

Nearby police agencies seek to recruit many of San Diego’s strongest young officers to fill their departments after San Diego taxpayers spend a significant amount of academy time and money training them. For example, the City of Chula Vista and San Diego County Sherriff’s Department offer up to \$5,000 signing bonuses to lure San Diego police officers away.

“San Diego taxpayers invest tens of thousands of dollars in academy time and training of recruits, only to lose them to other jurisdictions,” said Councilmember Kersey. “This is both fiscally irresponsible and a serious obstacle for strong, consistent public safety.”

SDPD staffing is down 300 officers from a decade ago and approximately half of its 1,800 person force will be eligible to retire in the next four years. This is particularly problematic in that the City of San Diego has always had one of the leaner police forces with fewer officers per capita than most big cities.

“Public safety is the most important service a city provides, and by not being able to recruit and keep our experienced officers, City Hall has failed the citizens of San Diego. We must implement an effective retention program that stops the bleeding, not tomorrow, not next year, but now,” said Councilmember Zapf.

“We must realize that the SDPD is in a critical state and that our police officers are different than any other employee group in the city,” said Councilmember Sherman. “I look forward to working with my colleagues and putting together a common sense, incentive based retention plan that keeps our officers in San Diego.”

Retention incentives could come in the form of increased allowances for items for which police officers currently pay out of pocket, including uniforms and equipment such as upgraded firearms. The four Councilmembers requested a Budget Committee hearing in July for the Police Department to present its official officer retention proposal.

## FACTS

- **According to San Diego Police Department's Five-Year Plan, the City of San Diego had almost 100 fewer sworn officers last year than it did five years prior.**
  - 241 (30%) of 800 SDPD officers hired after July 1, 2005, have left the City
  - Nearly 320 SDPD officers are retirement eligible
  - 800 officers will reach retirement age in the next four years
  
- **When San Diego loses an officer in his or her first year because it can't provide a competitive compensation package, the financial effects to the City is distressing.**

### Cost to San Diego Taxpayers

- Pre-employment vetting: \$4,200 - \$4,300
  - Equipment and Academy Tuition: \$14,500
  - Instruction: \$25,385
  - Officer compensation during first year: \$93,600
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- **According to the Police Officers Association, the City has incurred \$45.6 million in lost investment since 2005 due to police officers leaving SDPD.**
  
  - **The total number of crimes in San Diego increased 6.9% in 2012 compared to 2011. This was the first increase in crime since 2005.**

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