



PRESS STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chair of the Commission on Police Practices Response to POA Statement

The San Diego Police Officers Association has released a statement responding to public comments made by Chief Wahl regarding a recent SDPD use of force incident. The POA's assertion that "police use of force is always a reaction to someone's actions" and that officers "only use force" when a person resists or has a weapon is not a factual conclusion supported by the full body of SDPD cases reviewed by the Commission over many years. It is a narrative position that reflects the POA's role as a political labor organization, not as an impartial investigative body.

It is appropriate for the public, the media, city leadership, and SDPD leadership to acknowledge what they see in a widely circulated video. The footage in this case raises understandable concern and acknowledging that concern, as Chief Wahl did, is not prejudgment, it is a recognition of the community's lived experience. Admitting that the video warrants scrutiny and committing to a proper investigation is not only appropriate, but also a fundamental part of the Chief's responsibility to the public and to the department.

The POA's statement suggests that any expression of concern "causes a divide" or places officers at risk. It also reflects a pattern in which the POA characterizes scrutiny as hostility, and any accountability as bias against them. That framing overlooks the fact that transparency and timely communication are critical components of modern policing and oversight. Police accountability does not undermine officer safety, it strengthens community trust, which is essential to officer safety.

As always, the Commission remains committed to transparency, accountability, and fairness for all involved. We encourage all parties to allow the investigative process to proceed without assumptions, without defensiveness, and without narratives that preempt the facts. Oversight is not a threat to due process; it is a safeguard for it. The Commission will review this incident through our established process, grounded in evidence, policy, and law. We do not prejudge officers, nor do we shield misconduct.

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