



Urban League
San Diego County

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*Empowering Communities.
Changing Lives.*

July 23, 2015

Charter Review Committee
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Councilmember Chris Cate, Vice Chair
Councilmember Marti Emerald
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San Diego Organizations Call for a true Community Review Board on Police Practices

The San Diego Police Department (SDPD), like other departments around the country has a history of abuse of power and violence against people of color, women, immigrants, the LGBTQ community and activists. We San Diegans, and especially the most vulnerable in our community, have the right to feel safe, to be safe, and to be treated respectfully by law enforcement.

Abuse of power by SDPD takes many forms, from endless citations, questioning, searches and seizures, sexual harassment, physical abuse, wrongful arrest to police shootings. More than 200 cases of individuals killed by law enforcement have been documented. Rarely are the lives or names publicized. The tools to hold SDPD accountable are not working. Currently we suffer from a crisis of trust.

Our organization is endorsing a call to reform the Citizens Review Board on Police Practices (CRB). We call on the Charter Review Committee to reference the model of the San Diego County Law Enforcement Review Board, empowered by the voters in 1990 by passing Proposition A. (<http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/clerb/brochure09.pdf>)

City Charter reforms essential to the effective functioning of civilian and community oversight of the SDPD include:

1. Independent investigators and subpoena power, as provided to the San Diego County Law Enforcement Review Board by the voters in 1990 (Proposition A).
2. Intake, tracking and review of all complaints filed is done by the CRB rather than by SDPD Internal Affairs, also as modeled by the San Diego County Law Enforcement Review Board approved by the voters in 1990.

The only thing about the San Diego County Law Enforcement Review Board that the City of San Diego would do well NOT to emulate is not consistently providing adequate funding and staffing to carry out the voters' will and to provide cost-effective, independent review of San Diego's police.

We additionally recommend that the Charter Review Committee make two further revisions to the City Charter to reinforce the community-based nature of independent police oversight:

1. Change the name from "Citizens Review Board" to "COMMUNITY Review Board".
2. Have the Members of this Community Review Board on Police Practices appointed by the representatives elected by the 9 City Council Districts – 2 per District, plus 1 appointee by the Mayor.

Please reference the support by all of the undersigned organizations as evidence of the overwhelming desire by the public to address a local and national crisis engulfing our Police services.

Sincerely,



Will Williams
Advocacy Manager
Urban League of San Diego County