

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

August 16, 2016

Improving Police-Community Relations through Law Enforcement Training

Police work in the 21st century is more nuanced than it was years ago. Historically, police agencies have measured their performance against a restricted set of crime-focused indicators: crime rates, arrests, workload, response times, etc. Modern day law enforcement officers, however, must be prepared to take on a wide variety of roles, from problem-solver to counselor, provider of first aid, among other skill sets. More than ever, sending officers into the field without proper vetting, up-to-date training and without the skills to communicate appropriately with the constituents they serve would be irresponsible. Although better tactical and arrest protocols are an essential component of police work, by themselves, they do not constitute justice. In the face of a national debate over the excessive use of suppression tactics and perceived sanctioned violence against communities of color, it is imperative that the County of Los Angeles (County) continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to justice reform.

This challenge is an opportunity for law enforcement, an opportunity to both effect positive change within the profession and innovate ways to strengthen relationships between police departments and the communities that they serve and reduce overall harm. In correlation with instituting body-worn cameras to benefit officers and communities with evidence documentation to increase accountability and

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transparency, crisis intervention training to better assist individuals in mental health crisis, the appointment of an Inspector General to conduct independent investigations, and establishing the County's Civilian Oversight Commission to restore public trust and promote community policing practices, the Board of Supervisors must leave no stone unturned to advance criminal justice reform and end divisiveness.

Currently, existing law creates the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), which requires the development and dissemination of guidelines and preparation for all law enforcement officers, thereby establishing the criteria for training and certification for Law Enforcement Professionals in California. Within these guidelines, laws prohibit a police officer from engaging in racial profiling and require the training to explore patterns, practices, and protocols that prevent racial profiling. These laws exist with the intent to promote police integrity within departments and to prevent conduct that deprives individuals of their rights, privileges, or immunities protected by the Constitution of the United States.

However, racial profiling is the explicit, overt response to inherent forms of bias that have been recognized or identified in police practices. In contrast, implicit racial bias can cause institutions or individuals to act on racial prejudices unknowingly, even in spite of good intentions and nondiscriminatory policies or standards. Mandates should be developed within law enforcement protocols to examine an individual's limitations with cultural competency, the root cause and impacts of prejudice, the training to combat inner truths, and to measure and address disparities as they arise.

Implicit bias describes the unconscious but spontaneous mental association that individuals make between groups of people and stereotypes about those groups. Under certain conditions, these involuntary connotations can influence behavior, affecting how people respond in biased ways even absent of explicit and knowing prejudice. In the context of the criminal justice system and community safety, implicit bias is presumed to have significant and, at times, tragic outcomes regarding interactions between police

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and citizens. Nationally, recent examples, witnessed through print, broadcast news and social media, has shed a spotlight on this oftentimes ignored reality.

Research in neurology and social-cognitive psychology has shown that people hold implicit biases simply by paying attention to the world around them. Institutional racism, mass incarceration, income inequality, political dysfunction, media coverage and a long history of incidents between marginalized communities and law enforcement officials are mere examples of problems all cities in the United States continue to face. The impacts of social, cultural and systemic conditioning have shaped the evolution of public relations. Reducing the influence of implicit bias is vitally important to strengthening relationships between police and minority communities during these troubling times.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

- 1) Request the Sheriff, in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer and the Inspector General, to summarize the required training guidelines for deputy cadets mandated by the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) related to implicit bias and cultural competency instruction, and outline the continuous education and certification opportunities for Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department personnel through in-service training, and prepare a written report to the Board of Supervisors (Board) within 45 days;
 - Also, provide the Board with a report on any multi-dimensional performance measurements utilized to capture adherence to Constitutional Policing Practices (e.g. monitoring department operations, observance to policies and strategic plans, highlighting achievements and exemplary service of officers, while simultaneously, detecting patterns of bias and misconduct).

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- 2) Direct the Chief Executive Officer, in collaboration with the Interim Chief Probation Officer, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, the District Attorney, Fire Chief, the Superior Court, the Los Angeles County Bar Association Indigent Criminal Defense Program, and any other public safety departments and key community stakeholders they deem necessary, to analyze their respective required training guidelines related to implicit bias and cultural competency instruction, and to prepare a report back to the Board within 45 days; and
- 3) Direct the Chief Executive Officer, in collaboration with the Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations, to assess national evidenced-based/best practices for the training and implementation of Constitutional Policing Practices, with a specific emphasis on inhibiting implicit racial bias and improving racial identity sensitivity in law enforcement/criminal justice systems, and report back to the Board in writing within 90 days.

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