

April 23, 2024

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

Race-Neutral Shooting Targets - County Support for Senate Bill 1020 (Bradford)

In recent years, a number of law enforcement agencies across the country have been discovered using shooting targets that primarily and specifically depict Black men. Last year in Georgia, an image that was posted to the Villa Rica Police Department's Facebook page showed the use of a printout of a Black man for target practice during a firearm safety class. Although the Department stated they use shooting targets that depict people of all races, the image caused outrage among community members. In 2022 in Michigan, the Farmington Hills Police Department faced similar scrutiny after a Boy Scout troop toured the building and discovered the use of images of Black men for target practice. That same year, artist and activist Tracy Brown brought to light a program in which the United States General Services Administration (GSA) supplied federal agencies with rubber dummy shooting targets that resembled Black men. Soon after, the GSA stated they removed these dummies from the program, but there remains no legal prohibition on their use.

Law enforcement training impacts decision-making. When a police officer or Sheriff's deputy is trained to discharge a firearm at an image of someone from a specific ethnic group, they are being taught to shoot at that ethnic group with more frequency and familiarity. Numerous studies demonstrate the ways implicit and explicit bias plays a role in police officer decision-making

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related to use of force, including through the discharging of firearms. Changing training practices by prohibiting the use of race-specific shooting targets can help reduce these biases that lead to disproportionate use of force against people of color by law enforcement agencies across the country. Senate Bill 1020, which was introduced to the California Legislature by Senator Steven Bradford, would do just that. The bill would ensure that all shooting targets used for training by law enforcement entities and other agencies be race-neutral, specifically by prohibiting the use of ethnic shooting targets by local agencies. This is a common-sense piece of legislation that will help make sure that law enforcement shooting training practices do not explicitly contribute to racial biases in policing.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Office's Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch to support Senate Bill 1020.

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JH:cc/kc