



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

CITIZENS' REVIEW BOARD ON POLICE PRACTICES NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2012
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Response to San Diego County Grand Jury May 22, 2012 Report:

The Citizens Review Board on Police Practices (CRB) constantly seeks improvements to help advance its purpose of impartially investigating complaints against SDPD officers and administration of discipline.

The SDPD complaint process works and citizens should continue to use it. In just the last three CRB meetings there have been at least 13 sustained complaint allegations against SDPD officers. Over the years, the CRB has been instrumental in helping shape and modify police policy with very recent accomplishments of changing SDPD vehicle towing procedures—making it less likely for citizens to have their car towed during traffic citations and arrests—and influencing methods of counting money and property—establishing a more reliable and trustworthy process.

The CRB is proud that we have already begun taking action to address many of the issues raised by the Grand Jury on our own initiative, months prior to the issuance of this Report. A proactive, 4-hour, Saturday morning Special Meeting, addressed many similar issues and, more important, discussed solutions. Work on these issues—in addition to our 20+ hours of monthly case review efforts (*all volunteer without pay*)—continues in earnest on CRB bylaws, case review, meeting decorum, enhancing our diversity, as well as other important processes. As with any company or commission, improvements always can be made and the CRB welcomes legitimate criticism and logical solutions from all sources, including the Grand Jury.

However, our credibility and reputations called into question, the CRB cannot remain silent about a Grand Jury “investigation” that (1) is severely limited in scope, and (2) relies heavily upon accusatory conclusions not based in fact.

At no time was I asked to provide information to the Grand Jury, nor was the current CRB Chair, 2nd Vice Chair, nor past Chairs. I am not aware of any current CRB members (a total of 23) who appeared or were questioned. If the Grand Jury purports to conduct fair, impartial, and complete investigations, surely current members of a Board being investigated—at least a few—should be questioned, should they not?

Moreover, use of pejorative and conclusory terms such as “cronism” and “prejudice” are significant accusations that deserve specific explanations and factual support. The Grand Jury fails to provide such detail. Without support based in fact, one would never allege that the San Diego County Grand Jury discriminates against women because 14 of its 19 members are men. Nor, without substantial facts, would one allege that the same Grand Jury is prejudiced against young people because 17 of its 19 members are retired workers.

Throughout the Report, other remarkable errors appear that demonstrate the Grand Jury’s misunderstanding of the CRB, its membership, and processes. To specify a few: A lack of time is the primary reason for member turnover not intimidation; a new committee was proactively formed 4+ years ago to broaden membership diversity; CRB teams often disagree with Internal Affairs during case review; the committee interviewing CRB applicants does not consist of only CRB members; and, probationary status has been applied to CRB members who violate conduct codes.

Despite our disagreements, the CRB will review the Grand Jury findings and work with the Mayor’s Office to determine whether any of the recommendations represent practical, legal and beneficial, solutions to current issues facing the Board. And, the CRB will continue to voluntarily serve our fellow San Diego citizens honestly and critically.

Citizens' Review Board on Police Practices
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