



SOLANO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
Thomas A. Ferrara, Sheriff-Coroner

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August 9, 2021

Honorable Donna L. Stashyn
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Solano Superior Court
600 Union Avenue
Fairfield, CA 94533

Re: Sheriff-Coroner's Response to 2020-2021 Grand Jury Report – Does Bias Infiltrate Solano County Law Enforcement

Judge Stashyn:

Under Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, I am responding to the following recommendations contained in the 2020-2021 Grand Jury Report that pertain to matters under my control as the Solano County Sheriff-Coroner:

Finding 1 – *The Solano County Civil Grand Jury found that local law enforcement agencies comply with the statutory requirements when providing training. However, bias training is only required and conducted every five years. Local law enforcement administrations agreed there is too much time between training sessions.*

Response to Finding 1 – I agree with this finding.

Recommendation 1 – *County law enforcement agencies adopt a more frequent schedule of diversity and bias training over and above the current five-year requirement.*

Response to Recommendation 1 – I agree with the recommendation; POST has implemented an additional 4 hours of required training that includes Bias, Escalation vs. De-Escalation, Communication Elements, Listening Skills, Persuasion, People with Disabilities, and Team Communication During a Critical Incident; this additional training has increased the standard of Perishable Skills Training from 14 hours every 2 years to 18 hours every 2 years.

Recommendation 2a – *Law enforcement administration's seek increased funding for diversity and bias training.*

Response to Recommendation 2a – I agree with this recommendation; the Sheriff's Office is open to research and apply for grant opportunities for diversity and bias training. Should grants not be available, we will seek additional funding through the County budget process.

Recommendation 2b – *Collaborate with other local law enforcement agencies in providing diversity and bias training.*

Response to Recommendation 2b – I agree with this recommendation; Solano County Sheriff's Office does this with other trainings and will seek to include other local law enforcement agencies should we have diversity and bias training scheduled for our officers at the Sheriff's Office.

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Finding 3 – *More under-represented people need to be represented in decision making roles.*

Response to Finding 3 – I disagree partially with this finding; the term “under-represented” is vague and ambiguous; however, to the extent that it is intended to refer to all forms of diversity, the Sheriff agrees with this finding.

Recommendation 1– *Law enforcement agencies promote more under-represented people to decision making positions.*

Response to Recommendation 1–I disagree partially with this recommendation; the term “under-represented” is vague and ambiguous; however, to the extent that it is intended to refer to all forms of diversity, the Sheriff agrees with this recommendation.

Finding 4– *California Penal Code section 13651(a) states: “Every police department, sheriff’s office, or other entity that employs peace officers shall review the job description that is used in the recruitment and hiring of those peace officers and shall make changes that emphasize community-based policing, familiarization between law enforcement and community residents, and collaborative problem solving, while de-emphasizing the paramilitary aspects of the job.” All administrators mentioned the general population’s lack of trust of law enforcement officers.*

Response to Finding 4– I agree with this finding.

Recommendation 4a– *Ensure that training de-emphasizes a paramilitary approach to policing.*

Response to Recommendation 4a–I agree with this recommendation; Solano County Sheriff’s Office currently promotes a community service-based approach to policing.

Recommendation 4b– *Use a collaborative approach with community organizations to problem solve.*

Response to Recommendation 4b–I agree with this recommendation; Solano County Sheriff’s Office currently has a Resident Deputy Program that collaborates with the community in a customer service mannered personal approach.

Finding 5– *For some Law enforcement agencies employee turnover is an issue.*

Response to Finding 4– I agree with this finding.

Recommendation 5b– *Law enforcement agencies find ways to achieve pay equity in the county to limit turnover in smaller communities.*

Response to Recommendation 5b– I disagree partially with this recommendation since it is not within my purview.

Finding 6– *There are reports from the Federal Bureau of Investigation that extremist groups are infiltrating law enforcement agencies. While local law enforcement agencies investigate applicants as part of the vetting process, they rely on employee and citizen complaints to identify current staff social media postings for extremist ideology.*

Response to Finding 6– I agree with this finding.

Recommendation 6a- *Solano County law enforcement agencies monitor social media postings by current staff for extremist content.*

Response to Recommendation 6a- I partially agree with this recommendation; the Sheriff's Office has over 600 employees and volunteers, we look into this on a case by case basis when information is brought to our attention regarding social media posts that may have extremist content.

Recommendation 6b- *Law enforcement agency administrations keep up with the technology that their employees are using.*


Response to Recommendation 6b- I agree with this recommendation; the Sheriff's Office has strong social media presence and uses many of the same platforms that our employees use.

Recommendation 6c- *Law enforcement agency administrations research and implement technology which assists in monitoring social media without violating first amendment rights.*

Response to Recommendation 6c- I disagree with this recommendation; we currently do not have knowledge of technology that could monitor this without being in violation of first amendment rights.

I would like to thank the Solano County Grand Jury for their time invested in this matter and for their report of findings and recommendations. As always, the recommendations and comments of the Solano County Grand Jury are greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,



Thomas A. Ferrara
Sheriff-Coroner

cc: Solano County Grand Jury
County Administrator's Office