

Political Action Proposal

- I. **Title:** Criminal Justice Reform in San Diego:
- II. **Submitted by PB Democratic Club members:** Wendy Gelernter, Larry Stowell, and Mark Malcolm
- III. **Describe the issue:** The San Diego Police Department (SDPD) lags sadly behind most major American cities in its approach to criminal justice reform. The PB Democratic Club can join other voices in San Diego in calling for the city to enact these two fundamental reform actions:
 - Ban the carotid neck restraint: Carotid neck restraint methods are permitted by the San Diego Police Department, even though they pose significant medical risks – including death –, can be costly to police departments in terms of legal actions, is used disproportionately against people of color, and is not as effective as other methods. These methods have been banned or severely restricted in police departments of most major cities, including Philadelphia, Los Angeles, New York City, and Washington, D.C.
 - Strengthen the San Diego Community Review Board on Police Practices (SDCRBPP or Board): The Board reviews serious complaints brought by the public. However, investigations are conducted in conjunction with the police department, resulting in questionable conclusions. Review Boards across the country, including the San Diego County’s Law Enforcement Review Board, are more independent of law enforcement bodies and have stronger oversight roles. The City should follow the lead of San Diego County and provide the board with the ability to conduct its own independent investigations, including paid investigator staffing, subpoena power and regular issuance of publicly available summaries of Board findings.
- IV. **Alignment with Democratic Party principles:** The California Democratic Party 2018 platform has significant emphasis on criminal justice reform, including calls to *“insist on independent investigators in cases of police use of deadly force”* and to *“Implement the policies and practices of de-escalation that enable law enforcement to work in a safe and productive manner **rather than resorting to physical restraint** (emphasis added), *violence, arrest or the threat of restraint, or violence or arrest in the face of anger, disagreement or resistance that is not a threat to the peace officer or others”*.*
- V. **Importance of the issue:**
 - These are winnable issues. The City Council’s Democratic super-majority, and the leadership of Council Member Monica Montgomery, who has pledged to make criminal justice reform a cornerstone of her role, make these issues more winnable than at any time in recent history. In addition, communities of color and civil rights organizations have long advocated these reforms and have thus paved the way with legislators and the public.
 - Activism on these issues will help build linkages with communities of color and civil rights organizations in San Diego.

- Help improve the police department and the city’s image as progressive forces in criminal justice reform

VI. Proposed actions:

1. Educate Club membership and the general public by:
 - Developing informational documents and talking points for publication on the PB Democratic Club website, and for distribution at Club meetings
 - Arranging for a presentation by criminal justice reform expert (e.g. Monica Montgomery or Genevieve Wright-Jones)
 - Letters to the editor and/or OpEd submissions to the Union Tribune
2. Coordinate with organizations already involved in these efforts:
 - ACLU
 - Racial Justice Coalition
 - We The People
 - San Diegans for Criminal Justice Reform
3. Lobby City Council members:
 - Letter writing
 - Phone calls
 - Delegations

VII. Desired result(s):

- A change in SDPD procedures to ban the use of the chokehold
- Provide the SDCRBPP with the ability to conduct its own independent investigations, including paid investigator staffing, subpoena power and regular issuance of publicly available summaries of Board findings.

VIII. Timeline and person(s) responsible:

Action	Completed by	Person responsible
Assemble criminal justice reform team	2/7/19	WG
Educational documents online	3/1/19	WG
Criminal justice presentation arranged	3/1/19	WG
Letters to editor/OpEd campaign	4/1/19	Team member TBD
Coordination with other organizations	4/1/19	Team member TBD
Letters/phone calls to City Council	4/7/19	Team member TBD
Delegation(s) to City Council	March/April	Team member TBD