

**CITIZENS' LAW ENFORCEMENT REVIEW BOARD  
POLICY RECOMMENDATION**

**WHITE SUPREMACY AND/OR EXTREMIST GROUPS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT**

**BACKGROUND:**

Law enforcement agencies nationwide have come under increasing criticism for its employees participating in groups or organizations which have led to an erosion of public trust in law enforcement officials, specifically white supremacist and extremist organizations. Further, there continues to be an abundance of examples of individuals, groups and/or organizations which promote hate and/or hold beliefs which are counter to an equitable society.

In 2006, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) warned of the potential consequences of white supremacists infiltrating state and local law enforcement agencies, even going so far as to say it was a national security issue.

“Addressing White Supremacy and Extremism” was a training session presented at the National Association of Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE) 2022 Annual Conference. The overview of the session was, in part, as follows:

Recent events, including the January 6, 2021, insurrection, demonstrate that some law enforcement officers have aligned themselves with white supremacist organizations and paramilitary gangs, like the Oath Keepers and the Three Percenters. Armed gangs and groups of avowed racists, homophobes, and misogynists should play no role in contemporary law enforcement. Too often, law enforcement officers have affiliated themselves with groups dedicated to white supremacy. This, coupled with over-policing, places communities of color at risk. Unfortunately, several law enforcement agencies have embraced white supremacist groups and paramilitary gangs as partners in law enforcement.

When law enforcement officers join, support or advance hate group propaganda and beliefs, questions arise as to their own fairness, judgment and commitment to fulfilling the oath they swore to uphold. Also, their association with these groups undermines the credibility and legitimacy of the agency that employs them and creates doubt that all communities will be served equitably. Many law enforcement agencies invest considerable time, effort and money to cultivate community trust. Any association with hate groups or paramilitary gangs tends to sabotage that investment and damage public trust.

The San Diego County Probation Department (Probation Department) has several Policy and Procedures (P&P) pertaining to prohibited conduct and associations, as follows:

P&P Section 903.6.3, “Discrimination, Oppression or Favoritism” reads as follows:

Discriminating against, oppressing or providing favoritism to any person because of age, race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical or mental disability, medical condition or other classification protected by law, or intentionally denying or impeding another in the exercise or enjoyment of any right, privilege, power or immunity, knowing the conduct is unlawful.

P&P Section 903.6.4, “Relationships,” with the applicable parts reading as follows:

(d) Associating with or joining a criminal gang, organized crime and/or criminal syndicate when the employee knows or reasonably should know of the criminal nature of the organization. This includes any organization involved in a definable criminal activity or enterprise, except as specifically directed and authorized by this department.

(e) Associating on a personal, rather than official basis with persons who demonstrate recurring involvement in serious violations of state or federal laws after the employee knows, or reasonably should know of such criminal activities, except as specifically directed and authorized by this department.

P&P Section 903.6.9, "Conduct," with the applicable parts reading as follows:

(f) Discourteous, disrespectful or discriminatory treatment of any member of the public or any member of this department or the County.

(g) Use of obscene, indecent, profane or derogatory language while on-duty or in uniform in a discourteous or disrespectful manner.

(h) Criminal, dishonest, or disgraceful conduct, whether on- or off-duty, that adversely affects the member's relationship with this department.

(m) Any other on- or off-duty conduct which any member knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming a member of this department, is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale, or tends to reflect unfavorably upon this department or its employees.



These policies do not acknowledge that participation, whether in-person, electronically, or via social media, in groups which and/or association with individuals who hold or espouse beliefs which discriminate against a group of people undermines the credibility and legitimacy of the Probation Department and creates doubt that all communities will be served equitably.

The Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB) believes the Probation Department must take all necessary and legal measures to establish and maintain the public's trust and, as such, should amend current policy to more specifically prohibit its employees from participating in or associating with groups or individuals defined in the previous paragraph.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATION:**

Pursuant to Section 340.9(g) of the San Diego County Administrative Code, the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board (CLERB) shall have the authority to review and make recommendations on policies and procedures of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department and San Diego County Probation Department (Probation Department). As such, CLERB recommends the Probation Department amend Policy and Procedures (P&P) Section 903.6.4, "Relationships," or create a new, stand-alone P&P that captures the following, or words to that effect:

Employees shall not participate and/or associate, whether in-person, electronically, or via social media, with groups or individuals who espouse beliefs which discriminate against an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics. Such participation or association undermines the credibility and legitimacy of the Probation Department and creates doubt that all communities will be served equitably.

Submitted by: 	Date:  11-7-22	Reviewed by: 	Date:  11-7-22
Paul R. Parker III, Executive Officer		Lynn Setzler, Supervising Special Investigator	