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Yolanda M. Jackson

February 28, 2018

Mr. John Arntz
Director of Elections
Department of Elections
City and County of San Francisco
1 Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Analysis of SFPOA Ballot Measure

Dear Director Arntz:

I write to you as Executive Director of the Bar Association of San Francisco (BASF). Our Criminal Justice Task Force has worked collaboratively with the San Francisco Police Department since we convened it in 2015. We are an 8,000 member organization and we have committed significant resources of time and research to work with our Police Department and Commission to improve training, accountability and transparency for our department – in short to assist our department’s alignment with 21st Century policing and national best practices.

Members of our Task Force have worked over the last two years and we have presented two lengthy research papers to the Commission regarding the wisdom of Taser deployment. All of the efforts of the many stakeholders, which include the BASF, the Command staff of the SFPD and the Commission have been collaborative and informed. We believe we have played a critical role in this process and we know it to be consistent with the US DOJ Recommendation to achieve collaborative reform.

We have also submitted an Amicus brief in support of the City Attorney’s argument in the matter of SFPOA v. SF Police Commission, A 151654 for we believe in sound governance and the important role of collaborative reform and the authority of the Police Commission to set policy. The SFPOA’s appeal, like the current ballot measure, which you entitle “Use of Tasers by San Francisco Police Officers” pose parallel challenges to sound decision making for this City and for the Police Department. Regarding the current Ballot initiative, Chief William Scott put it succinctly in his letter to you yesterday:



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“This measure is the antithesis of the spirit of many of the US DOJ COPS Office recommendations as it would not promote a nimble process allowing modifications or changes to CED related policies if the changes are inconsistent with the measure. Moreover, it is not a national best practice to promulgate policing operational policies relating to equipment usage and regulation by voter majority or a four-fifths vote of a legislative entity such as the Board of Supervisors. This responsibility to set and make policy adjustments and the responsibility to manage the operations of the Department should rest with the Police Commission and the Chief of Police respectively.”

As you revise your draft Digest, we encourage you in the strongest terms possible to alert the voters of this City that the Commission has already approved Taser deployment for the SFPD and that a “NO” vote will not alter that. They should also know that the Commission, in collaboration with the Chief, not the voters via an overly simplified and misleading ballot measure drafted by a police union, is the proper authority to decide policy and a “YES” vote will undermine the role and authority of the Commission and our Chief, for it is their role to “set and make policy adjustments” as duly noted by the Chief.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Yolanda Jackson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Yolanda Jackson
Executive Director