

Alameda County Sheriff's Office

Lakeside Plaza, 1401 Lakeside Drive, 12th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-4305



Gregory J. Ahern, Sheriff

Director of Emergency Services
Coroner - Marshal

(510) 272-6866

May 25, 2017

Mr. Eric Babson
1094 Cragmont Avenue
Berkeley, California 94708

Dear Mr. Babson:

I am in receipt of your letter dated April 18, 2017, regarding the militarization of policing and Urban Shield training. After review of your letter, I offer the following responses to your concerns.

I disagree with your initial premise that assumes law enforcement is being militarized. The equipment and training that I provide to my staff is equipment specifically used in law enforcement; we have no military equipment. The military does not work and has not worked with local law enforcement during any of our responses, which have saved lives.

You indicated law enforcement has military style equipment. What type of equipment; you do not specify. I can assume you mean ballistic vehicles, long rifles and our utility uniforms. All of these items have a specific law enforcement use and they add to the safety of our personnel. Certainly, we do utilize this equipment, but only on mission specific incidents. I am very aware of the concerns of many Alameda County residents; and, we limit the use of such items until, and only when, the need arises.

You make mention of SWAT, which in the Alameda County Sheriff's Office is our Special Response Unit (SRU) utilization during raids. Each of our operations are preplanned and a document is prepared which is reviewed by multiple management personnel. Each SRU drug operation is conducted after the issuance of a search warrant authored and signed by a Superior Court Judge. Each operational plan for an SRU drug raid is reviewed for a "threat level." Only when the threat level reaches a certain criteria, is the use of specialized equipment approved.

Not knowing if you have experience in the execution of narcotics warrants, I would like to explain some of our reasoning. Our Special Response Unit is trained to move as a team and to quickly apprehend the known suspects. These missions are inherently dangerous for law enforcement personnel. I have heard previous arguments from others that law enforcement uses special tactics on low-level drug offenders. These characteristics of our enforcement actions are very unfair. The arguments failed to include the number of handguns, rifles and other weapons recovered from these offenders, even multiple guns at the same location from multiple suspects.

Mr. Eric Babson
May 25, 2017
Continued Page Two

Our Urban Shield training is far more than a competition. We train First Responders from a number of various disciplines. Included in the training are personnel from law enforcement, fire, medical teams, communication teams, emergency managers and more. This training is utilized for a coordinated response to a terrorist attack, and man-made or natural disasters within the greater Bay Area. At the same time, we are training with new technologies and equipment that would be utilized in any disaster. You, being a Berkeley resident should be aware of the Oakland/Berkeley Hills fire in 1991. That tragic event showed many gaps with the equipment, training needs, communication, and responses. We train to limit the gaps and have a well coordinate response. Urban Shield has created positive bonds and a collaborative response framework between regional first responders, local and regional management agencies, numerous critical infrastructure, public and private sector stakeholders, and state and federal agencies.

As you suggested, our focused training is also greatly beneficial to our "actual demands of the jobs." Much of the technology and equipment we use allows our personnel to do their daily job more effectively and safely which results in better service to the communities we serve.

Thank you for your letter. I hope I had addressed your concerns. Should you require further information, please contact Assistant Sheriff Brett Keteles at 510.208.9964.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Ahern".

Gregory J. Ahern
Sheriff-Coroner

GJA:CCN:cqv

cc: Brett M. Keteles, Assistant Sheriff

Alameda County Sheriff's Office

Lakeside Plaza, 1401 Lakeside Drive, 12th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-4305



Gregory J. Ahern, Sheriff

Director of Emergency Services
Coroner - Marshal

510-272-6866

March 28, 2017

Mr. Eric Babson
1094 Cragmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

Dear Mr. Babson:

I received your letter expressing concerns regarding the Federal government under the President Trump administration to enforce federal immigration law.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office does not conduct any front-line immigration enforcement. The Sheriffs of the State of California do not wish to act as immigration police, nor will my agency. No local law enforcement agency in Alameda County conducts immigration enforcement. The jurisdiction to do such enforcement falls under the authority of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office works very hard to maintain public safety and build trust in our communities. We are required to follow all State and Federal laws. As such, in regards to immigration, the Alameda County Sheriff's Office follows the Trust Act (AB 4, Ammiano-State government: federal immigration policy enforcement, enacted in January 2014), the Truth Act (AB 2792, Bonta - Local law enforcement agencies: federal immigration policy enforcement: ICE access, enacted January 2017), and Federal Law 8 U.S.C. section 1373. Our current practices remain in compliance with the above laws, as well as our own policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory J. Ahern".

Gregory J. Ahern
Sheriff-Coroner

GJA:dr

Alameda County Sheriff's Office

Lakeside Plaza, 1401 Lakeside Drive, 12th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-4305



Gregory J. Ahern, Sheriff

Director of Emergency Services
Coroner - Marshal

(510) 272-6878

October 3, 2018

Mr. Eric Babson
1094 Cragmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

Dear Mr. Babson:

Sheriff Ahern received your letter dated September 23, 2018, and wants to thank you for your kind words. Since Sheriff Ahern will be attending meetings outside of Alameda County, he has asked me to respond to you.

As you may know, there are a number of county agencies which are eliminating various fees associated with the criminal justice system. The Sheriff's Office will be partnering with the District Attorney, the Probation Department and the Public Defender's Office in this effort. In our case, we will be eliminating the fees charged to individuals who participate in our Work Alternative Program.

Fees associated with the Work Alternative Program were originally designed to accomplish two objectives:

1. To provide an incentive for the convicted individual to fully participate in the program given the fact that there was a personal financial investment.
2. To help offset the costs associated with providing the program.

Since the Work Alternative Program is a voluntary option which may be incorporated into the sentencing process by the judge handling each case, participation fees are fully disclosed to the potential participant to allow a decision based on all of the facts. The Sheriff's Office has always funded the difference between the amount collected in fees and the actual costs of the program. In general, the costs which are not covered by fees exceeds \$750,000.00 per year. The loss of the fee revenue (approximately \$350,000.00 per year) will necessitate a reduction in the number of available positions in the Work Alternative Program, unless the Board of Supervisors provides additional funding.

The Sheriff's Office believes in alternatives to custody and is committed to the re-entry process. We offer a wide variety of programs both in and out of custody to men and women who express the desire to become productive members of society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard T. Lucia".

Richard T. Lucia
Undersheriff

RTL:rl

Alameda County Sheriff's Office

Lakeside Plaza, 1401 Lakeside Drive, 12th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612-4305



Gregory J. Ahern, Sheriff

Director of Emergency Services
Coroner - Marshal

510-272-6866

July 20, 2018

Mr. Eric Babson
1094 Cragmont Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94708

Dear Mr. Babson:

I received your letter urging me to not use county law enforcement resources to enforce national immigration laws. I understand that you are opposed to the efforts of the Federal government under the President Trump administration to enforce federal immigration law.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office does not conduct any front-line immigration enforcement. The Sheriffs of the State of California do not wish to act as immigration police, nor will my agency. No local law enforcement agency in Alameda County conducts immigration enforcement. The jurisdiction to do such enforcement falls under the authority of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency.

The California State Victim Notification service (VINE) helps victims of crime obtain information about the custody of their offender and is provided by this office and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). VINE is a free service that is available 24-hours a day, seven days a week. The Alameda County Sheriff's Office was the first agency to implement the VINE system. VINE is designed to protect victims of crime and is not intended to be a tool for ICE immigration enforcement.

The Alameda County Sheriff's Office works very hard to maintain public safety and build trust in our communities. We are required to follow all State and Federal laws. As such, in regards to immigration, the Alameda County Sheriff's Office follows the Trust Act (AB 4, Ammiano-State government: federal immigration policy enforcement, enacted in January 2014), the Truth Act (AB 2792, Bonta – Local law enforcement agencies: federal immigration policy enforcement: ICE access, enacted January 2017), SB-54 (Law enforcement: sharing data, enacted October 2017), and Federal Law 8 U.S.C. section 1373. Our current practices remain in compliance with the above laws, as well as our own policies and procedures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory J. Ahern".

Gregory J. Ahern
Sheriff-Coroner

GJA;jm