

AB-392: The Purge of Peace Officers?

Have you ever been faced with a split-second decision? Usually, the human brain manages to devise a surprisingly rational solution to the dilemma. Police officers encounter such decisions more often, but with substantially higher criterion: public and personal safety. However, AB-392 is going to overload officers' decisions with chances to be criminalized. This new bill is not only distracting but misguided and inefficacious. It also defies one of the founding purposes of government, which is to promote the general welfare.

The average bullet travels at about 2,500 feet per second and the average draw speed is 1.5 seconds. Officers already essentially have no time to evaluate the situation, and it is certain that this bill would add a lot more to question about their planned actions. Officers will have to choose between going with their expeditious gut instincts or spending valuable time on pondering whether or not pulling the trigger is "necessary". According to a study by the National Institute of Justice [1], 34% of cops who have been required to use deadly force have had fears of legal or administrative problems. AB-392 will reduce police involvement since the thought of such problems will be on their minds more than before. The study also states: "The finding that most officers in this study experienced little long-term disruption as a result of shooting a suspect calls into question the appropriateness of training that stresses the severe guilt and depression felt by some officers who shoot." This shows that there is a larger problem: the inconsistencies of police training.

As spoken by Barack Obama: "Understand, our police officers put their lives on the line for us every single day. They've got a tough job to do to maintain public safety and hold accountable those who break the law." It is common knowledge that a tough job requires conventional and well-established training. According to the Commission on Peace Officer

Standards and Training [2], the current law in California only requires a de-escalation training requirement of two hours every two years, and twenty-four hours of variety training. However, different law enforcement agencies execute their training programs differently, resulting in a difference in skill and therefore, efficiency. A viable solution is to pass SB-230, a bill that focuses on setting stronger and more specific standards for police training. This bill will elevate the requirements for first aid and use of force. It also adds a training requirement for addressing people with mental disabilities, which is one of the most significant causes of gun violence. If we enact SB-230, we could prevent unruly use of deadly force incidents from happening, instead of imprisoning cops for incidents that they were not properly trained for.

Furthermore, AB-230 is not the correct solution to the original problem it was supposed to solve, which is the shooting of Stephon Clark. The peace officers had enough suspicion to open fire. A common misconception was that as soon as the officers saw Clark pointing something like a gun towards them, they fired. If one would simply search the details up [3], it is obvious that Clark's slate was not clean and Clark has smashed at least three car windows before jumping fence walls to run from the police. Once the police caught up to him, they repeated: "Show me your hands!" three times, and despite the clear warnings, Clark still advanced towards the officers. About two minutes after the police fired, one could hear one of the officers saying: "He was still pointing when I saw him again". These two cops did not simply shoot Stephon Clark because he was part of the minority, which is an argument that many people who support the bill constantly bring up. There is an adequate amount of evidence to prove them right, and even to this day, the cops have not been imprisoned for this incident. Moreover, according to LAPPL Director Rob Harris [4], out of the 114 officer-involved shootings in 2018, only two of

them were shootings under false circumstances. This proves that this bill does not have the proper solvency for what it was meant for.

In the final analysis, not only does AB-392 not serve its purpose, it deters police from stopping crime as well as incriminates police for quandaries which they were not prepared for. Legislators should not vote for this bill, but instead for SB-230, a viable and more efficient alternative. Every single day, police officers are going through mental trauma, getting abused verbally and physically, if not, killed serving our country. Why are lawmakers proposing to make these loyal and daring citizens' jobs even harder?

References:

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2. Apex Officer. "Police Training Requirements." *Apex Officer - Police Training Requirements*, <https://www.apexofficer.com/police-training-requirements>.
3. "How the Stephon Clark Shooting Unfolded." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 22 Mar. 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/national/how-the-stephon-clark-shooting-unfolded/2018/03/22/7165a116-2e0e-11e8-8dc9-3b51e028b845_video.html.
4. TheLAPPL. "Director Rob Harris' Interview." *YouTube*, YouTube, 10 Apr. 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6EyofKnRfQ>.