

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF POLICING IN PIMA COUNTY: A RESOLUTION OF THE PIMA COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Old ways of policing in American are not working, and the problems with policing are deep-seated and systemic.

In many communities the police budget dwarfs budgets allocated for schools, health care, roads, and parks. For generations police officers have been trained to think of themselves as “warriors” whose job is to go to war every shift, and approach every interaction with the public as a matter of “us versus them.” Less than 5% of 911 calls concern violent crime yet police departments around the country have armed themselves with military weaponry, including assault rifles and armored personnel carriers, and routinely deploy these weapons against unarmed citizens to prosecute the unwinnable and racially tainted “war on drugs.”

For generations we have over-policed communities of color, and subjected them to racially and ethnically disproportionate arrest, prosecution, and imprisonment. Officer-involved shootings and uses of force disproportionately cause the injury and death of black and brown and native people, all of whom are killed before they are convicted, when they are still presumed by law to be innocent of any crime. In many situations that have come to public attention, officers have escalated routine stops and non-violent situations into demonstrations of physical and deadly force. Prosecutors almost never charge officers with a crime for killing an unarmed person, even if that person presented no threat to the officer or the public. Courts have ruled again and again that police officers are immune from civil liability for fundamental civil rights violations. Politicians from all parties have used racist dog-whistles and “tough on crime” platforms to win elections, and paid little heed to the corrosive effect this has had on our constitutional rights and the physical safety of minority communities.

As oppressive as current forms of policing are for many of our communities, they are also detrimental to the men and women who serve in law enforcement. While underfunding social programs that serve individuals in crises, Americans have unfairly expected police officers who lack proper training or experience to respond to calls for help from people experiencing mental health and substance dependence crises. The training law enforcement officers do receive often effectively bars them from forming bonds of trust with the communities they serve, which causes many of them to experience their own isolation, mental health issues, and even elevated suicide rates.

In addition to reforming policing, we as Democrats are committed to addressing and reversing the root causes of racism and poverty which all too often manifest themselves in the criminal justice system.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Pima County Democratic Party commits itself to the following polices and principles, and will advocate for their adoption at the local, state, tribal, and federal levels

A. A NEW APPROACH TO COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. Governments should create community response departments independent of police departments, trained and responsible for responding to calls for assistance from people and families experiencing physical and mental health crises.
2. Governments should create peacekeeping departments independent of police departments, responsible for responding to calls for assistance better suited to de-escalation and discussion than armed force.
3. All calls for assistance should be routed through dispatchers independent from police agencies, who are trained in crisis management, CPR, mental health first aid, and substance abuse issues, and who are tasked with determining the agency most appropriate to respond to a particular call.
4. Governments should reexamine the budgets of all police agencies, and allocate a higher percentage of funds to community-led gun control initiatives, environmental protection, health, education, and welfare programs than is allocated to law enforcement.
5. Governments should create independent civilian oversight boards invested with final authority over officer discipline and termination. These boards should be fully funded and staffed and legally vested with investigative authority, including subpoena power.
6. Governments should remove all police officers from K-12 schools, and the school-to-prison pipeline dismantled by funding and empowering school districts to address all student disciplinary issues outside of the criminal justice system.

B. A NEW APPROACH TO POLICE TRAINING AND PROTOCOLS

1. All police agencies should adopt an approach to policing which values all human life above all else.
2. All police applicants should be required to undergo thorough background checks that examine all prior arrests, convictions, and affiliations with white supremacist organizations and any other hate groups. No applicant should be hired if they were previously terminated from another law enforcement agency, or if they resigned in lieu of termination, or if they misrepresented whether they were terminated or resigned in lieu of termination, which should be grounds for immediate termination.
3. Before they are certified, all officers should be required to successfully complete a two-year academy program that focuses on community-specific linguistic and cultural training, implicit and explicit bias, de-escalation, pacific conflict resolution, mediation, and protecting the health and well-being of every member of the community. Certified officers should be required to complete refresher courses in these areas on a regular basis. Before graduation from the academy, all applicants should be required to accrue a certain number of hours with local community organizations, in order to spend time with the people they will be responsible for keeping safe.
4. No police department is tasked with going to war against the communities they protect and serve, therefore no police department should be equipped with military-style weaponry.
5. Police departments should ban teargas, chokeholds, strangleholds, and all other methods of interfering with a person's ability to breathe.

6. All police officers should be equipped with body-worn cameras that can only be turned off when an officer is not responding to a call.
7. All police agencies should develop comprehensive use-of-force policies outlining how and when force may be used, and affirming officers should always use minimal force to subdue individuals.
8. All police agencies should clearly communicate and enforce consequences up to termination for officers who make false statements, or fail to intercede when a fellow officer engages in an excessive use of force.
9. All police agencies should maintain publicly accessible, regularly updated databases detailing community complaints against officers and use of force incidents, and tracking demographic and geographic data of people who come into contact with law enforcement officers. These databases should be subject to regular independent audits.
10. All police agencies should maintain publicly accessible, regularly updated databases containing the names of police officers who have been disciplined or prosecuted for committing substantial misconduct, including making substantially misleading or false statements. These databases should be subject to regular independent audits.
11. All police agencies should establish internal departments of racial equity charged with ensuring policy decisions are thoroughly assessed for racial impact, and ensuring internal operations such as hiring, firing, and contracting are racially equitable. Police departments and their personnel should reflect and represent the diversity in the communities they serve.
12. All police officer standards and training boards should establish internal departments of racial equity charged with ensuring policy decisions are thoroughly assessed for racial impact, and ensuring internal operations and composition are racially equitable.
13. All police agencies should be required to notify the chief of agency, chief elected executive, elected prosecutor, and civilian oversight board within 48 hours of the death or serious injury of any person in the presence of police officers. All records of such incidents should be made public within 96 hours of their occurrence.
14. Police unions should work for the benefit of all labor, not just their members. Their contracts should be limited to collective bargaining issues, should not address use of force protocols, and should not protect officers convicted of criminal offenses from discipline or termination.
15. All police agencies should ensure rigorous efforts to care for the mental health of its officers.
16. All police agencies should provide the family members of police officers with an effective, internal and confidential method to communicate concerns they have about the mental health of their loved ones.

C. A NEW APPROACH TO LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PROSECUTION

1. State legislatures should rewrite laws permitting officers to use force and deadly force, to allow officers to be prosecuted for committing crimes in the same manner as the general public.
2. State legislatures should establish more protections against police interrogations and warrantless searches and seizures.
3. State legislatures should sever ties between local law enforcement, ICE, and Border Patrol, prohibit cross-training and data sharing with federal immigration authorities, and prohibit immigration authorities from having access to individuals in police custody for the purposes of investigating potential violations of civil immigration law.
4. State legislatures should establish and fund deflection and diversion programs intended to reduce the number of people arrested for non-violent, victimless offenses.
5. State and federal legislatures should abolish the doctrine of qualified immunity, and allow police officers to be held liable for violating a person's constitutional rights.
6. State and federal legislatures should prohibit paying monetary settlements of improper use of force cases from general revenue.
7. State and federal legislatures should ban racial profiling in policing.
8. State and federal legislatures should abolish "no-knock" warrants.
9. State and federal legislatures should abolish civil asset forfeiture, and only allow criminal asset forfeiture of property directly related to criminal conduct proven beyond a reasonable doubt.
10. State and federal legislatures should prohibit pre-textual stops.
11. State and federal legislatures should establish Offices of Inspectors General, independent of all other police and prosecutorial agencies, whose responsibilities are to investigate and criminally prosecute all police misconduct.
12. The U.S. Supreme Court should review and reverse *Graham v. Connor* (1989), and allow courts to judge police conduct by what is objectively reasonable.
13. State and federal legislatures should decriminalize the possession of drugs for personal use, and spend the estimated \$41.3 billion saved annually on drug abuse prevention, rehabilitation, and overdose prevention programs.