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Assembly
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COMMITTEES
CHAIR: AGING AND LONG-TERM CARE
ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, SPORTS,
TOURISM, AND INTERNET MEDIA
HEALTH
TRANSPORTATION
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 4 ON
STATE ADMINISTRATION

June 15, 2021

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06/15/2021

Assemblymember Rudy Salas
Chair, Joint Legislative Audit Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Audit Request Related to Law Enforcement

Dear Chair Salas:

I respectfully request an audit regarding information related to law enforcement officers and prison guard's affiliation with subversive, violent, and/or hate-based organizations (hate groups). Although there is currently no definition for hate groups, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a hate group's "primary purpose is to promote animosity, hostility, and malice against persons belonging to a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity/national origin which differs from that of the members of the organization." Existing state law prescribes certain minimum standards for a person to be appointed as a peace officer, including moral character and physical and mental conditions.

Furthermore, existing state law prescribes certain disqualifying factors for a person to be employed as a peace officer, including a felony conviction. Local jurisdictions may disqualify individuals associated with hate groups from being a law enforcement officer however; nothing in state law indicates that a law enforcement officer is prohibited from such activity.

Last year, we witnessed the tragic killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, we have seen law enforcement officers involved in fatal shootings with minority members of our community, and witnessed their violent interactions with protestors. Now more than ever, it is essential that peace officers are rigorously vetted and screened during the recruitment and training process and throughout their career to ensure officers are not involved with, or a member of, any known hate groups.

Peace officers play a vital and trusted role in our communities. They interact with people, from various races, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and religions. As a result, any affiliation with a hate group is counterproductive, creates bias, and is inappropriate.

Therefore, the purpose of this audit is to help ensure that Californians receive law enforcement services that are free from bias and prejudice. At a minimum, the audit's report should include the following regarding any law enforcement officer affiliation with a hate group and practices to promote diversity in law enforcement:

1. Review and evaluate the laws, rules, and regulations significant to the audit objectives.
2. Determine the actions state entities, such as the California Department of Justice and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, take to collect and maintain information about hate groups and their membership. Assess processes for making information about membership in such groups available to local law enforcement and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) for employment screening purposes.
3. Assess the sufficiency of guidance—including from the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training—provided to local law enforcement agencies and CDCR related to diversity and screening for associations with hate groups during peace officer recruitment, hiring, and ongoing employment.
4. Determine whether any barriers exist for local law enforcement agencies and CDCR to identify and make employment decisions about peace officers and peace officer applicants who are members or associates of hate groups, including but not limited to any barriers in state law.
5. For each local law enforcement agency, evaluate the processes for the following:
 - a. Screening peace officer applicants for past or current membership or association with hate groups, collecting information about those associations, and reaching hiring decisions.
 - b. Detecting whether peace officers develop associations with hate groups while employed.
 - c. Recruiting and hiring peace officers to ensure the police force is reflective of its respective communities.
6. Assess whether the local law enforcement agencies have implemented effective practices in the following areas:
 - a. Training peace officers about bias and prejudice, and the threats that bias and prejudice can pose to effectively protecting and serving communities.
 - b. Processes to identify biased or prejudicial statements or actions by peace officers—including those alleged in complaints against officers—and intervene through education, disciplinary action, or other means.
 - c. Promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce and culture.

7. For each local law enforcement agency and CDCR, to the extent possible:
 - a. Identify biased or prejudicial statements, postings, or actions by peace officers, including but not limited to those alleged in official complaints.
 - b. Identify past or current membership, association, or participation in any known hate group.
8. Review and assess any other issues that are significant to the audit.

I greatly appreciate your time and attention to this matter. Should you have any questions, please contact my office at (916) 319-2046.

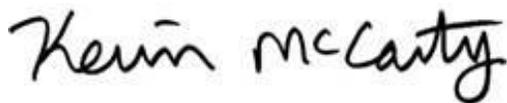
Sincerely,



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