



PREVENTING VIOLENCE
AND DEVELOPING
YOUTH LEADERS

YOUTH ALIVE!
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March 4, 2019

The Honorable Anna Caballero
State Capitol, Room 5052
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 230 (Caballero) – Oppose

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of Youth ALIVE! and our constituency of youth and families personally impacted by violence, we respectfully oppose your SB 230. This bill will allow law enforcement officers to use deadly force when they have other options available, and even when the person does not pose a threat. Although the bill addresses training and policy, it does so in a superficial and vague way, providing no requirements and setting no minimum standards. California has a deadly problem with police violence. Police in our state kill people at significantly higher rates than the national average, and disproportionately kill people of color, particularly those who are unarmed.¹ Unfortunately, SB 230 would do nothing to prevent these tragedies.

Youth ALIVE! is a national leader in addressing violence and Oakland’s anchor organization for violence prevention, intervention and healing. We work directly with victims of shootings and train young leaders to create change. We oppose this bill because of the devastating impact of police violence on communities of color. In cities like ours experiencing high levels of crime, we need policies that build trust in, not suspicion of, police accountability.

SB 230 requires all agencies to maintain use of force policies. Every agency in California already meets this demand. This bill doesn’t establish further requirements for the policies, other than providing “guidelines” on a list of topics, with no further specificity or clearer guidance. SB 230 would thus authorize agencies to issue policies that are in direct conflict with the recommendations of the California Attorney General,² which emphasized clarity and specificity on use of force policies – explicitly criticizing the type of vague guidance that would be permitted under SB 230. SB 230 similarly provides toothless training guidelines with no requirements, beyond a short list to be given “adequate consideration.” Beyond the subject, there is no specificity on what standard officers should be trained to.

Finally, SB 230 makes changes that allow officers to kill people who pose no threat to other people. It also allows officers to use deadly force even when it would have been safe, feasible, and reasonable to use alternatives. SB 230 fails to include any best practices, directly contradicts the recommendations of our Attorney General, and authorizes officers to kill people when there was no need to do so. For these reasons, Youth ALIVE! strongly opposes SB 230.

Sincerely,


Anne Marks
Executive Director

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¹ California Department of Justice, *URSUS – Use of Force dataset* (2018).

² California Department of Justice, *Sacramento Police Department: Report and Recommendations, 2019* (2019).