



PREVENTING VIOLENCE AND DEVELOPING YOUTH LEADERS

YOUTH ALIVE!  
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June 26, 2018

The Honorable Todd Gloria  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 4162  
Sacramento, CA 95814

HONORARY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

HON. DIANNE FEINSTEIN  
United States Senator

EDWARD JAMES OLMOS  
Actor

HON. BARBARA LEE  
United States Representative

**RE: Support Letter – AB 3131 (Gloria) – Transparency and Accountability in Military Equipment Acquisition**

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ANNE C. MARKS  
Executive Director  
Youth ALIVE!  
Oakland, CA

Dear Assemblymember Gloria,

On behalf of Youth ALIVE!, I'm writing in strong support for Assembly Bill 3131 (Gloria), which will enhance transparency and accountability in the acquisition of military equipment in our local communities.

Youth ALIVE! is a violence prevention and intervention organization that helps young people become leaders and advocates for the change they would like to see in their communities through our Teens on Target Program, mentors and supports healing for young people who have been violently injured through our Caught in the Crossfire program, and works with families grieving in the wake of a homicide through our Khadafy Washington Project. Our clients are impacted by Victim Compensation on multiple levels and this legislation could help them on their journeys of healing.

We are part of the gun violence prevention community that has worked together with law enforcement to pass legislation related to gun violence restraining orders, distribution of assault weapons, and open carry of firearms. We are concerned that many law enforcement agencies have acquired military-grade equipment without the knowledge or consent of communities where they serve.

American neighborhoods are increasingly being policed by peace officers armed with the weapons and tactics of war. Local law enforcement agencies can acquire surplus U.S. military equipment from the U.S. Department of Defense's 1033 Program, including armored tanks, grenade launchers, and assault rifles, and purchase the same types of equipment from private companies, often with the use of federal grants. This has led to the acquisition of military equipment by over 8,000 federal and state law enforcement agencies, from all 50 states and the U.S. territories, and in nearly all 58 California counties, as well as multiple state agencies, but there is an absence of transparency and civilian decision-making at the local level for the acquisition and use of this equipment.

The federal government is funding this militarization and deploying local law enforcement for immigration enforcement and to fight the failed War on Drugs, the battlegrounds of which are disproportionately in communities of color. Our neighborhoods should not be war zones and police officers should not be treating our communities like wartime enemies.

AB 3131 will require all law enforcement agencies to obtain approval from their governing bodies prior to receiving and deploying military equipment in their communities, whether that equipment

is produced by corporations or the federal government. It seeks to bring transparency to this process in accordance with the priorities and informed decisions of civilian elected officials.

AB 3131 is a reasonable approach, and absolutely necessary. The lack of a public forum to discuss the acquisition and use of military equipment further jeopardizes the relationship of police with the community, which is often undermined when law enforcement is seen as an military force rather than a public safety service. We can ensure that local law enforcement honors its mission to protect and serve, not wage war, by providing the mechanisms in AB 3131 for greater transparency, oversight, and accountability.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anne Marks', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anne Marks  
Executive Director