



# Blue Ribbon Panel on Transparency, Accountability and Fairness in Law Enforcement

The Blue Ribbon panel consists of **3** retired jurists from other jurisdictions

**7** law firms assisted the panel by providing working groups

The Panel reviewed over **4,000** incidents associated with the "Textgate" officers, and collected over **70** data points for each incident report

## Need for Transparency

In the post-Ferguson context, it is clear that there is a need for more transparency in law enforcement. While most peace officers carry out their difficult and often dangerous responsibilities with dedication, honor and integrity, the deplorable actions of a few SFPD officers have overshadowed the good of the whole, and eroded public confidence in law enforcement.

In March 2015, fourteen SFPD officers were identified as participating in a series of racist text messages that expressed virulent sentiments towards African Americans, women, LGBT and others. The challenge for the SFDA became how to review the police work these officers conducted, determine the existence of racial and other inappropriate biases, and identify how these biases translated into racially driven or motivated police enforcement in approximately 4,000 incidents.

## The Blue Ribbon Panel Team

DA Gascón assembled a Blue Ribbon Panel of three retired jurists from other jurisdictions who are regarded for their intelligence, experience and non-partisan interests to conduct a top to bottom analysis of possible racial bias in the department.

Seven law firms provided working groups to assist the panel on specific issues. In addition to reviewing the involved officers and cases, the panel and working groups examined aggregate data and policies of the SFPD, received community input, and, ultimately, issued a comprehensive report.

## Findings of the Report

In its report, the Blue Ribbon Panel found evidence supporting institutionalized bias within the SFPD. Several key findings revealed that the available statistical data indicated racial disparities in the department's stops, searches, and arrests. Officer accounts described a systemic and widespread culture of bias, and personnel data revealed a need for greater racial and gender diversity within the department. The Panel also found that the department lacked any meaningful internal disciplinary review process, and employed use-of-force policies contrary to best practices. Please visit the SFDA's website for the full report.

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