



AB 619 (Weber) – Enhancing Transparency & Accountability on Law Enforcement Use of Force Practices

What will AB 619 do?

AB 619 will enhance transparency and accountability concerning law enforcement use of force practices, improve public safety, and advance police-community relations. AB 619 will:

1. Expand existing state and local law enforcement reporting requirements to include not only deaths in custody but also serious uses of force.
2. Ensure that important circumstantial information (e.g., the type of force used) and demographic characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and age) are included in all reports on uses of force.
3. Require that the CA Department of Justice (DOJ) routinely analyze and publicly release the use of force information received from law enforcement agencies.

Why do we need AB 619?

Improving public access to information on law enforcement use of force practices strengthens police-community relations by enhancing transparency and accountability.

Recent events in California, Ferguson, Missouri, and around the nation have highlighted the importance of building strong, collaborative relationships between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

However, in California, public access to information about law enforcement use of force practices is extremely limited. Specifically, all state and local law enforcement agencies have submitted information on deaths that occur during custody—including deaths during arrests—to the CA DOJ since 1980. Yet, the DOJ has been unable to provide the public with detailed information about such deaths on a routine basis. In fact, its last report on the issue, released in 2005, was merely a brief overview and provided less than four-pages of information about more than 4,500 deaths in custody between 1994 and 2003.¹

According to the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, this lack of transparency not only inhibits public trust, but also hinders the development

of evidenced-based public safety reforms.² As recently explained by FBI Director James Comey:

How can we address concerns about “use of force,” how can we address concerns about officer-involved shootings if we do not have a reliable grasp of the demographics and circumstances of those incidents? We simply must improve the way we collect and analyze data to see the true nature of what’s happening in all of our communities.

AB 953 would satisfy this void by expanding current death in custody reporting to include serious uses of force. It would also ensure that the public has regular access to important demographic and circumstantial facts on use of force practices.

For more information about AB 619, co-sponsor contacts include:

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¹ Criminal Justice Statistics Center, Outlook: Death in Custody, California (May 2005), available at <http://oag.ca.gov/sites/all/files/agweb/pdfs/cjsc/publications/misc/DINOutlook.pdf>

² Interim Report of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing (March 2005), available at http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/Interim_TF_Report.pdf