

Public Safety Committee 06/20/2020

District	Public Comment
N/A	Supports for re-routing funding for police militarization to services for the homeless, mental health, veterans, and people of color.
1	Implores the City Council to sign the 6 sapd.org petitions to repeal Chapters 143 and 174.
N/A	Urged the City Council to demilitarize the police and to re-route funds for the police to services for domestic violence, food security, and homelessness.
N/A	Stated that he was against defunding the police.
N/A	Stated that she was grateful for police officers.
8	Stated that she supports police reform but not defunding the police.
N/A	Stated he supported decreasing the SAPD budget and divest the funds to necessary social services. He requested that City Council examine issues of accountability and use of force or violence when SAPOA contract comes up for renewal next year.
9	Urged City Council to rise above rhetoric and do what is right for our citizens in addressing unchecked often unintentional racial, cultural, or personal biases in policing. She requested redirected funds for police training and education in complicated cases of abuse, or for the formation of a separate unit to handle such cases.
N/A	<p>As productive members of our families, churches, communities, and places of employment, we all benefit from real accountability. When we are performing and acting as we should, we get positive reinforcement. When we are not acting as we should and are harming ourselves, others, or our organizations, that accountability protects people and our communities. Nowhere is that more important than with our police, those that protect our safety and have the heavy burden of potentially using deadly force. Good cops get to be role models for other cops and new recruits. Bad cops change their behaviors or do not get to be cops anymore. This makes perfect, logical sense and is a critical part of how successful organizations work. Unfortunately, the Texas legislature and the SAPOA have severely and holistically handicapped accountability in the SAPD. Through Chapters 143 and 174 of the Texas Local Government Code, SAPOA has virtually removed accountability to the public and the Police Chief. As a result, SAPD is infamous for allowing more fired cops back on the job than any other city in the nation. We must do better. Our Police Chief and the best cops in the SAPD want it to be better. You were elected to make better happen. I urge you to put opting out of these parts of the Texas Code on the next ballot. Thank you for your service to San Antonio.</p>

District	Public Comment
10	<p>It is well past time for a substantial - possibly complete - transfer of funding and resources from the fear-driven, \"law-and-order\" approach to community safety to one that prioritizes effective solutions for root problems (poverty, addiction, illness, hopelessness, and desperation) and bringing the systemic structures designed to maintain the status quo to an end. As a citizen and taxpayer, I strongly object to the use of city/county resources to fund a police force of the size and nature we have, and will consider anything less than a dramatically reduced, de-militarized force, better screened and better trained, and focused on community-building and de-escalation as a failure on the part of my elected representatives and an endorsement of systemic racism and state-sponsored violence. I recognize that this won't be easy, and, unfortunately, will require political courage and sustained public pressure, but, honestly, it's something a truly responsive government and power structure wouldn't even have to be asked to do. And I remind you, and warn all interested parties, that half measures and re-brandings are not acceptable, and a clear breach of trust. Olean is effectively the same thing as Olestra was, and I don't want either one of those ingredients in anything anyone I care about is served. Obviously, the city will have to address the over-reaching of the police union and its contract in a bold and serious way. Although I'm broadly pro-union, police unions are a different breed, failing to demonstrate solidarity, or embrace accountability of any kind. To that end, I support the efforts of Fix SAPD to repeal/rework chapters 143 and 174 of Texas Local Government Code, and Chief McManus' desire to remove disciplinary constraints in the union contract. The city's well-known issues with removing cruel and capricious officers from the force are an embarrassment. Thank you.</p>
N/A	<p>Please just understand that WE ARE SCARED. We are human, and all living organisms have a FIGHT or FLIGHT response. We are burdened. We are in distress. We NEED police to treat this issue for what it is and they can do that in so many ways. A friendly smile, just even looking at us and telling us to not be afraid, that they understand, that they are not here to hurt us. I work with the mentally ill and even when I am being spat at, attacked or threatened, I've been trained to find ways to calm these patients. We are just like them! We just want to be treated fairly. OUR SKIN IS NOT A CRIME!!! Another thing, all black children sit with their parents at a very young age and are told that because of our skin color, we will always be looked at as bad.. Can you imagine having to tell this to your child? But they have to tell us, because if they don't, we will grow up in the Bliss of ignorance and it could cost us our lives... It HAS cost us our lives. Please change the minds of the black children in your community. Even if they do something bad.. are they not human? Talk to them. Empathize with them. Understand them. Comfort them. This cycle must be broken. These children may grow up to be a person YOU NEED one day. That's the circle of life!</p>

District	Public Comment
N/A	<p>The City of San Antonio needs to seek alternative methods of ensuring public safety, instead of the police department. Mental healthcare workers, representatives from homeless shelters, social workers, and a range of other personnel can be dispatched and attend to emergency situations. Therefore, the city needs to defund the police department and increase funding in programs that help to positively keep the city safe, such as affordable housing, better public education, arts programs for community members to participate in, just to name a few. I am sure that other well informed citizens are proposing other safe and nonviolent ways to protect and foster a strong San Antonio community. With the amount of law enforcement present aside from SAPD, it seems ridiculous that we are pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into this department founded upon systematic policies and laws that are intended to keep black people down and keep white people on top. San Antonio needs to reevaluate how it should keep it's people safe. A department that reinstates two thirds of officers fired because of a bargaining agreement is not one I want in the city. I understand that the police department cannot be abolished immediately, but while efforts in the city are aimed at disbanding the police department permanently, and while efforts in the city are aimed at building a strong community, one that is inclusive and supportive of alternative nonviolent methods to keep the citizens of San Antonio safe, physically, mentally, and emotionally, the city and police department need to make reforms that reduce the amount of times any officer uses excessive force, or any physical contact that does not need to be made. The police department needs to change and understand that they are part of the issue.</p>
N/A	<p>There is a difference between accountability and funding. In fact, they have nothing to do with one another. Defunding police puts their lives as well as the lives of citizens at risk. Holding law enforcement officers accountable for their actions is absolutely necessary, and ensuring they have the proper training is the first step toward supporting LEOs. It is asinine for any city government to reduce financial support as a means to better protect the community. Read that again. The city council is proposing that we reduce resources for police so that we can better serve our communities by limiting police presence that could result in the mistreatment of a citizen. I recommend that the city government of San Antonio be a leader by using real statistics, science-based learning and psychology to create an improvement plan that supports our police department and better serves the citizens. How about the city highlights the good things done by police instead of hyper focusing on the bad? What an amazing opportunity to lead! I hope the city chooses to take advantage of this prime position during this time of knee-jerk reactions.</p>

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10	<p>Chapter 143 sets up unreasonable standards for due process, then creates a loophole for an officer to avoid culpability if any of a myriad of mistakes are made during the investigative process. (143.123(k)). Chapter 174 sets up a one-sided dispute resolution process, where arbitrators and judges are instructed to consider certain conditions affecting police jobs, but does not require them to consider the city™s concerns regarding public accountability and public safety. (174.156) It's disgusting that SAPD has officers on the force who have fed a homeless man feces and watched while another officer pulled out a woman's tampon while she stood on the curb. The city council should be ashamed for standing by doing nothing. They must put their full weight behind the citizens efforts to gain signatures to for referendums to end Chapters 143 abs 174. If you do not support the citizens efforts in gaining signatures, then you are responsible for these violent actions of SAPD officers.</p>
1	<p>This hearing is just another example of why we need to defund the police. You routinely employ officers who demonstrate and proudly display attitudes of white supremacy and continue to murder Black and Brown citizens. You have Black and Brown communities decimated by COVID and white supremacy yet you want to continue to fund one of the biggest perpetrators of white supremacy-the police. We know reforms don't work. Defund SAPD. Though to some it may seem impossible right now, the reality is that prisons and police must be abolished. Many people still attempt to justify funding police by claiming that police uphold public safety. But in reality, public safety means something completely different. To me, public safety means: A robust healthcare system Food security Safety for people experiencing violence or homelessness Psychiatric care P U B L I C H O U S I N G Decent schools Parks & green spaces Art of every variety * ~ * L * I * B * R * A * R * I * E * S * ~ * Economic opportunities And much, much more I am asking you to please exercise your imagination and envision a society that serves all of us “ a society in which we can all live safe and dignified lives.</p>

District	Public Comment
1	<p>The murder of George Floyd was not a tragedy, it was an atrocity. I make my living by attending to the precision of words and ideas, so I reject the abuse of language that obscures the truth by replacing an honest word with a misleading one. The murder of George Floyd was not a tragedy, it was an atrocity. Moreover, recent weeks have made it clear that this spectacular atrocity is not an aberration. It is one symptomatic instance of widespread problems not only in police practice but in the political priorities of cities nationwide, which fail to address conditions of intergenerational economic inequality and social despair. It is these bleak underlying conditions that inflict chronic violence on poor communities, many of them black and brown and immigrant communities, which are in turn subjected to hyper policing, psychological intimidation, incarceration, and violent abuses of force. There is no reason to think that San Antonio is fundamentally different from other cities in this respect. Therefore we are morally responsible to answer for this moment. We cannot breathe. We hear this chanted in the streets. It is true. We must act. Rarely do great moral responsibility and opportunity come together as they have come together now. Far more common is the circumstance of feeling moral responsibility with little opportunity to make deep changes for justice. Now is different. The problem is much bigger than police rules of conduct. The scope of the solution must be bigger. The spell of normalcy is broken. Nobody wants to get back to the normal social and economic rules and practices. You must offer more than hope and more than incremental change, because incrementalism has delivered us to this terrible moment, and while hope might be good for breakfast, it makes a bad dinner. Get to work!</p>
5	<p>City Council we need changes to our SAPD departments. We need to pledge to sign the petition to repeal chapters 143 and 174 of the state local government. Our citizens are aware of the officers being fired by Police Chief and rehired again. We need to stop these types of actions. It affects our Upright Police officers and degrades our strong force. We as citizens will vote for these changes and our Citizens Council needs to step up. History can be repeated, for example the City of Camden, New Jersey disbanded its police department 7 years ago. Camden was routinely named one of the most violent cities in the US</p> <p>//www.cnn.com/2020/06/09/us/disband-police-camden-new-jersey-trnd/index.html</p>
N/A	<p>Public safety funds definitely need to be evenly distributed between all departments and cut police funding. It's way to high and can be beneficial to other departments. Also we need to find better ways to have our policing under control. They need more training hrs and Regular mental evaluations. The safety to the people in San Antonio are the priority, even if it's our own law enforcement that needs to be revised.</p>
N/A	<p>Ch. 143 and 174 help keep incompetent members of SAPD on the payroll to the detriment of everyone's safety. Let's get rid of Ch143 and 174 now!</p>

District	Public Comment
2	<p>To ensure public safety in San Antonio, police officers need to be held accountable for their actions. Members of the City Council must pledge to sign the petition to repeal chapters 143 and 174 of the state local government code. They also must prioritize disciplinary reform in the new contract negotiations next year. San Antonio cannot continue to have the ignominious distinction of being the city most likely to allow bad cops back on the force. The city must address its arbitration process in the following ways: 1) an officer's full discipline record should be allowable. All suspensions need to remain on the record to accurately report an officer's history and show progressive discipline in arbitration. 2) an officer's ability to take interrogatories at Internal Affairs should be rescinded. 3) an officer's ability to forfeit accumulated leave in lieu of suspensions should be removed to disincentivize illegal behavior. 4) the police chief's ability to review discipline records should be strengthened by removing restrictive and difficult timeline requirements on police management from the CBA. 5) The arbitration process: the new contract should explicitly prohibit arbitrators from reducing the punishment in cases involving perjury by officers. 6) The arbitration process: instead of 1 judge, expand to at least three arbitrators, one chosen by each side in the case, and the two chosen then agree on a third. As it is, the arbitrators are chosen by SAPOA, basically, and so the process is corrupt. The Council needs to do everything in its power to reform this process and signing on to the petition to end 143 and 174 is the best place to start.</p>
9	<p>I am appalled at what is happening at the hands of our police officers across the country, and I'm glad to see our city taking steps to remediate issues. One point that I've heard little or no discussion about is that the vast majority of the police violence is occurring by the hands of white, male officers. In fact I haven't heard of a single instance of a female officer's perpetrating excessive force or murdering a citizen. I'd like to see more female officers hired and promoted into leadership. We hear suggestions in many areas for racial and ethnic diversity and that organizations of leadership and authority should resemble the racial and ethnic make up of the population. Those organizations should also resemble the gender balance of the population. If 51% of law enforcement organizations were female, with an equal percentage in leadership positions, and especially if male officers were paired with a female partner, much of the violence would stop immediately. Try it and see what happens.</p>
N/A	<p>I fully support the blue and all funding that goes towards SAPD and all public safety measures. We need to continue to support our police department and that includes providing all necessary funding.</p>
N/A	<p>On behalf of our SAPD officers I ask you to please continue to support them. Our officers are some of the finest, most disciplined and committed and they deserve to be taken care of. They care for the community they serve and are committed to their duty to protecting all those in need. I support our SAPD officers and am thankful for their service to us.</p>
N/A	<p>I absolutely believe in the police department and would be horrified if they were defunded.</p>

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N/A	I want our police force numbers to remain the same and/or increase. I also want changes made so that officers who do not follow the policies and code of ethics with the public are removed. The 5% that make the 95% look bad, have no place in a high stress, dangerous job. Education and the military have code of ethics and conduct that are followed.
2	\"Use of Force Continuum\" There needs to be more clarification & specificity. The SAPD needs to \"Require Warning Before Shooting\", \"Ban Shooting at All Moving Vehicles\" (It puts civilians lives at risk), \"Require Exhaust Of All Means Before Shooting a Weapon\", \"Ban No-Knock Warrants\" & update language about what this actually means, in terms of Officer Steve Casanova who did not have an actual warrant & fired shots before even announcing himself as an officer. \"Strengthen Duty to Intervene\" language. Most importantly there is an absolute need to reprimand, hold accountable or fire officers who do not meet the basic standards of Use of Force Continuum. Who will follow ANY rules if there is no REAL punishment for breaking them? The answer? NO ONE. In this regard, we need city council to work with community leaders to completely repeal State Code 143 which gives police one-sided due process & undermines justice & accountability. It allows for no real accountability at all & it makes complainants disclose their name even though many disciplinary actions done to police never have to be disclosed to the public at all which takes away ALL accountability. Repeal State Code 174 which establishes a lopsided collective bargaining scheme that favors police associations (174.004). It allows the police association to ignore city concerns or public trust (174.156) In terms of Cadet training & continual education. 1. The psychological exam must be performed PRIOR to entrance into the academy & the needs to be thorough internal bias/racism examination prior to entry. Officers need to have CONTINUAL psych evals, every 2 years while employed & be fired if their behavior goes unchanged. The 4 psychologists used for the current psych evals need to be vetted by City Council & alternated every 4 years. A lot more could be done.
7	I am in favor of decreasing police funding and using this money for community based programs, education, housing, healthcare, mental health, and COVID response and recovery.

District	Public Comment
N/A	<p>I would like to ask a question about the San Antonio police during Covid-19. I would like to know WHY police officers continue to arrest people for low level offenses, instead of receiving a citation for Cite & Release? I don't know how the police have been trained but they are making the spread of COVID-19 so much worse. Police officers are stopping and arresting people without wearing any mask or protective gear. Bexar county jail has already had a long history of neglecting inmates health. The San Antonio Police Department continue to arrest people for certain low-level offenses, many of which have been black and latino. Many of the arrested have been immigrants, who get booked at the City Magistrate's Office or county jail, are been taken by ICE, and sent to Detention Centers, where many reports of Covid-19 have been confirmed. This is a personal attack on your communities. Why are they continuing to send these people to jail during world wide pandemic!? Prisons are not hospitals! Detention centers are not hospitals! They are not equipped with the supplies or knowledge needed to help the sick. Cite & Release is the only way to ensure the health safety of all involved. I DEMAND, for the safety of ALL San Antonio, that you enforce all San Antonio police officers to use Cite & Release.</p>
1	<p>I'm a criminal defense lawyer, and I take appointed misdemeanor cases. I have dealt with a lot of clients affected by mental health in my short time in this job. We need to have a different way of dealing with people who have mental health diagnoses than throwing them in jail for something they didn't even *understand.* We do not need police for these people -- we need social workers. On one case I have, 5-6 officers came to the scene for a criminal trespass. That's what I think about when I hear police demanding greater and greater shares of the budget. We also need to change the collective bargaining agreement in all the ways KSAT identified in their investigation entitled \"Broken Blue.\" Police should be much easier to let go and discipline. If they don't like it and quit in protest--great! I know that almost NO complaints are \"founded.\" How is that the case? Are our police perfect? Are we so different from any other major city? No way. I'm so happy that people are on the streets demanding a change because trying to have a bandaid solution won't cut it anymore. Police need to be let go and not rehired by the next agency. Extra training is not a solution. Further, why is anyone being arrested for marijuana anymore? Our DAs cannot even test it or prove it up as marijuana, and our cops refuse to stop arresting. Why? Because this person must have done something else bad so let's punish them anyway? We need to adopt the same rules they've established in San Marcos whereby the police are not allowed to arrest for low level marijuana -- they issue citations instead. We should be doing this for all kinds of offenses.</p>

District	Public Comment
1	<p>SA City Council Public Safety Committee, Thanks for taking the time to listen to the people of San Antonio on issues of public safety. It is important to remember that the people, not the police department (or officer's association), are the ones that get to decide how the department works, and what programs we want to fund. With contract negotiations coming up, and health care issues settled, it is an excellent time for us to continue to shape SAPD into a better and safer department. Below are my suggestions for changes I would like to see to the department. Emphasis on community --more SAFFE officers, the department hasn't increased the number of officer since 1995 --more Crisis Intervention officers --bonuses for officers who live in the communities they police --reduce dangerous encounters and start to build trust by ending certain proactive policing policies. Officers should not be looking for trouble, or doing anything that resembles a stop and frisk policy. Ultimately, some proactive policing policies MAY reduce crime in the short run, but ultimately result in a confrontational relationship between police and non-police citizens. Residents feel frightened or harassed and police come to see the people they are supposed to being serving and protecting as their opposition. Ultimately community trust in the Police erodes, and along with it respect for law and order erodes as well, this ultimately results in increasing crime. Better training --more time on Crisis Intervention Training --more time on diversity training --learning better tactical training, including principals of time, distance, cover, auditory exclusion, etc. Get rid of the bad apples --fix the arbitration system so the Department has the authority to get rid of the bad apples 2/3rds of fired officers have been rehired under current arbitration agreement</p>
7	<p>"Riot Gear" (helmets, body armor, etc) used in crowd control should be marked with easily readable ID numbers to promote personal accountability for actions taken by each officer. Allowing anonymity in a crowd of officers wearing vests, helmets, and masks leads gives 'bad apples' cover for behavior that requires a great deal of documentation to prosecute. The easiest way for "the system" to dismiss reports of bad behavior is to demand that the person reporting the offense identify the perpetrator. "If you can't tell me who did it, how can we investigate?" If the witness can say "it was the guy wearing number 12345" there's a place to start. And if authorities get a lot of independent reports about "the guy wearing 12345" on days John Smith wears 12345, and reports about "the guy wearing 67890" on days John Smith wears 67890, then there's a pattern that needs to be investigated, even if no single incident crosses the threshold of sanction. "The system" shouldn't be allowed to hide behind the explanation of "a few bad apples" if the system doesn't provide a way of identifying patterns of misbehavior. I am also troubled by video from Washington DC showing demonstrators yelling "Tell us who you are!" to riot police who were not even wearing insignia indicating their organization. Citizens should not be required to follow instructions of people who are not clearly identifiable as peace officers. Paramilitary groups can arm themselves, wear riot gear, and move through streets during demonstrations, but that doesn't give them rights to issue orders to other citizens. Peace officers need to be clearly identified in ways that it is illegal for other groups to mimic.</p>

District	Public Comment
3	<p>Systemic or institutional racism is not limited to law enforcement but may be interlocked with the medical profession to include private practices and hospitals (ie Stone Oak Methodist Hospital). There is a history of conformational bias by the medical profession that is known and impacts Hispanics and other minorities. My questions are: 1. Are the police obligated to inform you of their presence? Why are they (the police) there? 2. Are the police obligated to explain why one is being detained, placed in custody or arrested? 3. Are the police obligated to secure statements from all parties involved? Why or why not? 4. Are the police obligated to contact family members when a request is made and contact information is provided? 5. Why are the police used as medical transport and medical first responder? It is known the police are not medically trained. 6. Why are the police involved in medical emergencies or care when other more appropriate, trained, and qualified medical personnel are available? 7. If racial bias is suspected what remedies exists and is available for redress? Is it possible to file a complaint against the misuse of the need for police presence? Are there ways to correct the record. 8. Is there an economic factor for using the police instead of EMS? 9. Is using the police instead of EMS meant as scare tactics to solicit the flight or fight response or a negative response to retain some form of authority (by the initiator of the call to the police) because of race? 10. Do the police have discretionary judgment to determine the proper avenues for the type of medical care required? Thank you.</p>