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SFPD, CA DOJ, SF Mayor Mark Farrell Announce Independent Evaluation of SFPD Reforms

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MAYOR MARK FARRELL, CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY GENERAL XAVIER BECERRA AND POLICE CHIEF WILLIAM SCOTT ANNOUNCE INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF SAN FRANCISCO POLICE DEPARTMENT REFORMS

California Department of Justice to provide support following departure of U.S. Department of Justice decision to end Collaborative Review Initiative Agreements

San Francisco, CA—Mayor Mark Farrell, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra and Police Chief Bill Scott today announced that the California Department of Justice will collaboratively evaluate and report on ongoing reforms and the implementation of 272 recommendations at the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD).

This new agreement follows the decision by United States Department of Justice Attorney General Jeff Session to abandon collaborative effort with the SFPD to reform officer use-of-force policies, improve racial bias trainings, and enhance community policing, transparency and accountability efforts.

“We made a promise to our residents and to our communities that we were going to transform our police department—and partnering with Attorney General Becerra will allow us to follow through on that pledge,” said Mayor Farrell. “The SFPD has made measureable progress already, and the steps we have taken since the United States Department of Justice walked away have only strengthened our department. These reforms emphasize that every life is precious and every effort will be made to protect and defend our residents from harm. Our City is committed to making the SFPD a model law enforcement agency with the highest standards for accountability and transparency. I want thank the men and women of the SFPD for their commitment to reform. We are eager to see these efforts through with the help and partnership of the California Department of Justice.”.

"When local law enforcement agencies reach out for support, the last thing our federal government should do is abandon them," said Attorney General Becerra. "The California Department of Justice will stand with fellow law enforcement agencies that ask for vital assistance to promote trust, transparency and ultimately ensure public safety - both for our men and women wearing the badge and the communities they are sworn to protect. This agreement with the City and SFPD is critical for public safety. It serves as a prime example of state and local authorities collaborating in the absence of help from Washington."

In 2016, Mayor Edwin M. Lee asked the U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch and the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) to conduct a comprehensive review of the SFPD, with a specific focus on reforming use-of-force strategies.

The following year, the DOJ referred the request to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and signed an agreement to outline multi-year agreements with independent monitoring teams to ensure a sense of accountability and to rebuild trust with communities. The COPS team identified 94 findings and 272 recommendations that emphasized the safeguarding of life above all else. Today, more than half of those critical reforms have been implemented or are in the approval process and as a result, use-of-force incidents dropped 18 percent in 2017.

However, the DOJ under the administration of President Donald Trump has reversed course on providing community-oriented policing assistance to local law enforcement agencies. Last September, Attorney General Sessions announced that the DOJ's COPS office would no longer collaborate with the SFPD on the reform process. When that occurred, conversations began between San Francisco and the

California Attorney General to ensure that the reforms continued.

"These issues are personal for me," said Board of Supervisors President London Breed. "I have witnessed firsthand the consequences that stem from a lack of trust between our communities of color and law enforcement agencies. That is why I was one of the leaders who called upon the Department of Justice to provide an independent review of our Police Department which resulted in 272 recommendations. While our current Federal Administration may believe these collaborative approaches are no longer a priority, here in San Francisco we are not stopping. We are committed to these reforms and will continue to work with the California Department of Justice to advance them."

"Our residents need accountability, they need transparency and they need closure," said Supervisor Malia Cohen. "We will not abandon these critical reforms. Though the Federal Government has shown a lack of leadership, the State and the City are continuing forward for our community's safety. We will not give up until we restore trust between our law enforcement agencies and our communities of color."

"Our department and our San Francisco communities are witnessing the positive outcomes of Collaborative Reform," said San Francisco Police Chief William Scott. "Since we began this process, Use of Force has decreased 18 percent year over year and complaints against officers are down 8.5 percent. This collaboration with the California Department of Justice will reaffirm the independent evaluation of our work and provide the technical expertise necessary to help improve our police department. With the assistance provided by the California DOJ, the changes we are making will become long-lasting and embedded in our department culture."

Since the reform efforts began in 2016, the SFPD has completed 81 of the recommendations, submitted 79 others for review and begun the process on the remaining 112. The initiatives include the enhancement of existing policies that emphasize the safeguarding of human life, de-escalation techniques, and Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to respond to individuals experiencing mental or behavioral health crises. Additionally, leadership in the ranks has become more diverse, nearly tripling the number of women in leadership positions and more than doubling the number of minorities in leadership positions.

Other key accomplishments from the reforms include:

- Complaints to the Department of Police Accountability declined 8.5 percent in 2017.
- 819 SFPD members have attended the 40 hour CIT Certification course which provides trainees a set of tools to utilize in critical situations.
- The Department's Use of Force Policy was updated by the Police Commission following extensive discussion and public hearings.
- The Department's Training Division implemented mandatory Implicit Bias and Procedural Justice Training for all sworn members.
- Use-of-Force reports are now published on a quarterly basis.
- All electronic communications via department owned devices (cellphones, email and patrol car terminals) are automatically screened for uses of biased language. Violations are automatically forwarded to Internal Investigations for follow up.
- Officer encounters with the public are now recorded with the Department's eStops app and reported on a quarterly basis.
- The Community Engagement Division has been restructured to provide a strategic and department-wide platform to enhance SFPD's community policing and outreach efforts.
- The Department relaunched the Community Police Academy to provide citizens with opportunities to learn about how officers operate and interact with the community.

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