

## **San Mateo County Democratic Party Resolution for Reform of Law Enforcement and Increased Safety for San Mateo County Residents**

**WHEREAS** Tasers (Handheld CEWs), marketed as non-lethal tools for use by law enforcement officers, have been responsible for close to 1100 deaths in the US since their introduction – with nearly a quarter of those deaths occurring in California, and three deaths in San Mateo County in 2018 alone – are in fact clearly lethal, yet are used all too often as a control tactic before other de-escalation procedures are attempted and at times even when a suspect is complying with officer instructions, thereby posing a considerable liability risk for communities and law enforcement agencies that employ them; and

**WHEREAS** the use of Tasers is unregulated, training is often inadequate, the “safe” body target areas are increasingly limited, the product is difficult to use and largely ineffective – failing nearly half the time and shown by statistics not to lessen the use of guns, can cause lethal changes in heart rhythm, and very disturbingly, is employed disproportionately against people of color – employed 64% of the time against black men; and

**WHEREAS** the exoneration by the District Attorney of the five Sheriff’s deputies responsible for the death of Chinedu Okobi on October 3, 2018, by multiple Taser strikes and other violence has triggered widespread citizen condemnation and escalated concerns about racial injustice and police brutality in San Mateo County;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the San Mateo County Democratic Party calls upon the San Mateo County Sheriff’s Office to declare a permanent ban on Taser use and update department policies to emphasize the use of de-escalation tactics as the preferred practice in any situation, while expanding officer training to deal with sensitive issues such as racial bias, as well as mental, emotional, and drug crises, adopting a model where staff skilled in crisis intervention will be called to the scene of a mental health breakdown; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the San Mateo County Democratic Party urges the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors, recognizing its responsibility for the safety of all county residents, to introduce an amendment to the County Charter to create a law enforcement Civilian Oversight Commission with subpoena power, and until that commission is in place, to use its budgetary powers to curtail Taser use by withholding funds for Tasers and Taser training.

Submitted by:

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