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CONTACT:
Edward Sifuentes
esifuentes@aclusandiego.org
619-398-4497



Community Groups to Oppose Mayor's Secret Police Chief Panel

San Diego Deserves An Open, Transparent Process - Not Secret Panels.

SAN DIEGO – A coalition of community-based organizations gathered on Wednesday in front of City Hall to express their disappointment in Mayor Faulconer's flawed plan to select our next chief of police. Specifically, the group called on the mayor to do away with a proposal for a secret selection panel and asked for additional community forums in Districts 8 and 9.

In attendance were representatives of Alliance San Diego, Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association, San Diego La Raza Lawyers Association, San Diego Organizing Project, ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties, Mid-City CAN, Center on Policy Initiatives, The San Diego LGBT Community Center, and Community Assistance Support Team.

Members of the coalition said the selection process outlined by the mayor on Tuesday, which includes a secret selection panel and only four community meetings, fell far short of the mark. San Diegans deserve a public process, not closed-door interviews with a panel whose composition will not be revealed until after they decide who will be San Diego's next chief of police.

Norma Chavez-Peterson, executive director of the ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties, said: "Our community deserves an open, accountable, and transparent democracy. Instead, the mayor has closed the door to the community and wants a secret panel to make this decision for us."

Bishop Terrell Fletcher, pastor of City of Hope International and clergy member of the San Diego Organizing Project, said: "Peace, safety, and justice are in the hands

of our police chief. We cannot have a secret panel making a backroom decision about who that person will be.”

Coalition members also said that four community meetings are insufficient to gather input from our large and diverse city.

Chris Wilson, Associate Director of Alliance San Diego, said: “This cannot be considered a fair process unless there is real representation from those most impacted by this decision. We continue to call for and support a 15-member panel appointed by community stakeholders and additional forums to be held in Districts 8 and 9, where we know communities of color have disproportionate contact with police. We hope the mayor and his staff take the community’s recommendations seriously and change the process to prioritize community voices.”

Sean Elo, Director of Campaigns and Policy for Mid-City CAN, added that: "We were very disappointed to learn the Mayor made all of these decisions without any community input. Our Youth Council spent months researching successful community-led hiring processes and came to the table ready to collaborate with the mayor. We could not believe they showed up to our meeting having already drafted their memos and sent their press releases. Our youth and communities deserve more respect than that."

The speakers during the press conference were: Bishop Terrell Fletcher of the San Diego Organizing Project, Norma Chavez-Peterson of the ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties, Daniela Barron of Mid-City CAN, Andrea St. Julian of the Earl B. Gilliam Bar Association and Alara Chilton of San Diego La Raza Lawyers Association, and Chris Wilson of Alliance San Diego.

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