

Statement from San Diego Police Department

Lt. Scott Wahl, Media Relations Unit, response to Times of San Diego:

We disagree that we are not transparent regarding our body worn camera program. The San Diego Police Department values community trust and transparency in policing. Per our Department policy, which is attached, body worn camera video is considered evidence. As with all evidence, it must be protected. Releasing evidence could interfere with a defendant's right to a fair and impartial trial. It could also contribute to the re-victimization of a person(s) who has called us for assistance and often at their worst possible moment. Sensationalizing their traumatic experience is not appropriate.

There are many external entities, however, that may have an opportunity to view the body worn camera video. For example: the Independent Citizens Review Board on Police Practices; citizens that have filed a formal complaint; and the judge, prosecutor, defense attorney, jury, and others present inside a courtroom during court proceedings. In addition, Chief Zimmerman has also stated she would likely release the video for public safety purposes. These are all examples of how and when the video may be viewed.

We take pride in being the largest City in the nation to implement body worn cameras. We believe body worn cameras are a win/win for both the officer and the community. During the development of our comprehensive body worn camera policy we sought out our community stakeholders and welcomed their input. Some of the stakeholders were the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) among others. Part of our open and transparent efforts included our participation at the San Diego Society of Professional Journalists (SDSPJ) community panel in October of 2014 regarding body worn cameras. The NAACP, ACLU, La Raza and the San Diego Police Officers Association were all present for this panel discussion. There was nearly 95% agreement regarding our body worn camera

policy which included not releasing video footage for the protection of individual privacy rights.

We have carefully drafted our policy to balance a citizen's right to a fair trial, the preservation of evidence, the protection of privacy rights and police officer accountability. This is why we believe the nomination by the SDSPJ for the "wall" award is misleading and in complete contradiction to what the award is intended for.

Attached is the YouTube link for the SDSPJ panel discussion on body worn cameras for reference.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXjY6KidAis>

There are many other examples of how our Department is transparent. For example, we hold "Inside the San Diego Police Department" several times a year. Inside the SDPD provides citizens a unique opportunity to walk in our shoes as a police officer. It is held at the regional police academy and is open to any citizen who desires to learn and get hands on experience of what it is like to be a police officer. If you are interested in attending our next Inside the SDPD it will be held on April 25, 2014. For your convenience we have provided the link below to register.

<http://sdpolicefoundation.org/events/inside-sdpd/>

You can also follow us on social media where we encourage you to stay connected with the San Diego Police Department. Please click on the links below. And to quote Chief Zimmerman, "Let's all of us work together to make our great City even better."