

Resolution #6

Support for Safer Interactions between Law Enforcement and People with Disabilities

WHEREAS:

More than half of the encounters between law enforcement and people with disabilities result in use of force, due to the lack of training and knowledge of the individual's disability, and disabled individuals make up a third to half of all people killed by law enforcement officers; and

WHEREAS:

Use of force by law enforcement is currently under intense scrutiny, and according to a study released recently, regarding people with disabilities—including emotional, physical, cognitive and sensory disabilities—are nearly 44 percent more likely to be arrested by age 28, compared to 30 percent for those without disabilities; and

WHEREAS:

That threat increases with gender and race; Black men with disabilities are 55 percent more likely to be arrested by age 28 and Hispanics are 46% more likely to be, with 4-10% of the prison population having some form of developmental/intellectual disability and 70% of youth who are in the juvenile justice system; and

WHEREAS:

There are more than 700,000 people living with developmental/intellectual disabilities in California, and roughly one in 20 adults suffers from a severe mental illness and 1 in 59 children are diagnosed with Autism everyday. Many of these individuals are at a great risk of wandering or having contact with law enforcement at some point in their lives; and

WHEREAS:

Efforts have been made to educate and train those in law enforcement who come into contact with these individuals on how to interact with them and deescalate a situation with the least amount of force; and

WHEREAS:

UDW/AFSCME Local 3930 worked to support the passage of Senate Bill 11 and Senate Bill 29 in 2015 to address these issues; and

WHEREAS:

There have been efforts to expand the Statewide Alert systems in 2014 and BOLO's, "be on the lookouts," to be more inclusive of those with cognitive impairments of all ages, SB1330 in 2016; and

WHEREAS:

Recent efforts to pass legislation such as AB437 would provide law enforcement with a tool which alerts them as to what disabilities an individual may have. The creation of a statewide pro-active, voluntary database would provide vital information to facilitate a more positive and safe encounter with disabled persons; and

WHEREAS:

Local agencies are implementing these "Special Needs" type of registries and recent research shows that they are successful in bringing our loved one's home safely; and

WHEREAS:

UDW/AFSCME Local 3930 and its members who provide care through the state's In Home Supportive Services program (IHSS) for low-income seniors and people with disabilities, and are committed to protecting the safety of this vulnerable population;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

UDW/AFSCME3930 will commit to finding ways to facilitate safe interactions between police and members of the disability community, by continuing to build a coalition of like-minded allies and through the passage of legislation that creates a better system for identifying those with disabilities in all stages of the criminal justice system.

SUBMITTED BY:

Astrid Zuniga, Caregiver/UDW Exec. Vice-President