



Society for the Study of Social Problems

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) to urge you to join us in supporting our call to disarm campus police nationwide. SSSP is an organization of sociologists concerned with both empirical and theoretical research as well as public policy, and as such we felt it was necessary to speak up and address the dangers posed by armed police on our university and college campuses - especially with the killings of community members at UC Riverside and at Portland State University over the past few months.

The danger posed by armed police on our campuses is best understood as a structural problem. It is, at its heart, a pattern of dangerous behavior facilitated by institutions and representative of the militarization and securitization of our communities and our workplaces. These social conditions, stoked by the current administration and other politicians, facilitated by the 1033 Program, and fed by reactionary responses by administrators within higher education pose an increasing risk to students, faculty, and workers. It is at this confluence of social forces that we need sociological analyses to help clarify exactly what the problem is, where it stems from, and how to address it.

As such, we have called for the disarming of campus police across the nation. We do not take this step lightly, and as you will see from our resolution (see attached) we have worked hard to root this resolution in rigorous study and community research. As the United States is facing a crisis of science and policy it is especially important to confront the various myths about policing with actual historical and empirical data. We hope that this resolution also spurs greater interest in, and support of, research into ways of holding our communities accountable without the threat of state-sanctioned violence and death.

I encourage you to share this resolution and its sources, and if you would like to ask any further questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

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Resolution on Disarming Campus Police

Submitted by Amara Miller and B.B. Buchanan

WHEREAS, the history of policing in the United States is a history of racial terror; one which grows directly out of runaway slave patrols¹, the black codes², and anti-immigrant border patrols³,

WHEREAS, the history of policing is also a history of class oppression and violence against union organizing⁴, including roots in capitalist systems that frame disabled populations as “demographic threats”⁵,

WHEREAS, police have also historically targeted gender and sexual minorities in support of a heteropatriarchal legal system⁶,

WHEREAS, campus police greatly increased their presence and power on university and college campuses in the 1960s and 70s to quell student protest⁷, especially those led by marginalized populations⁸,

WHEREAS, many campuses have a long history of activist suppression⁹, including but not limited to the use of pepper spray¹⁰; and,

WHEREAS, university and college campuses continue to exhibit incidents of racialized violence by police forces¹¹, and in which their access to weapons increases their threat to the students and university and college workers¹²,

WHEREAS, police violence on university and college campuses continues to disproportionately affect and endanger those who are not only people of color, but also those who are disabled¹³, LGBTQ+¹⁴, and/or lower-income student and worker populations¹⁵,

WHEREAS, police forces have increasing access to military-grade weaponry and vehicles¹⁶. Although a temporary ban was placed on this by then President Obama, our president has promised to reinstate the transfer of military grade weapons to police departments¹⁷.

WHEREAS, despite not needing deadly weapons in the course of their job¹⁸, campus police continue to utilize a culture of fear around school shootings to justify their increasing armory of military grade hardware,

WHEREAS, there is evidence that campus police rarely intervene in school shootings until after the events are resolved¹⁹, when they mostly serve to provide secondary support. Despite not demonstrating need²⁰, we still see a move towards increased militarization and armament,

WHEREAS, the majority of SSSP members have as their workplace university or college campuses, which have long served as central places for education, organizing, and activism, making the police a health and safety issue and marking these campuses as important spaces of influence and change,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP) will post a public statement calling for higher education systems to disarm their campus police of all lethal and military-grade hardware.

BE IT RESOLVED, in this statement the SSSP will also endorse harm reduction strategies such as additional trainings for campus police (e.g., anti-racism training, de-escalation, and crisis management), ending military and police collaborations (e.g., 1033 program, Urban Shield), and additional transparency and community accountability measures for police accused of excessive force.

BE IT RESOLVED, that SSSP calls on universities to provide guidelines for non-police, community-based responses to issues such as mental health crises, policing of smoking in non-smoking areas, or people calling police as a response to the presence of Black and Brown bodies. These alternatives will make it so that even the possibility of unnecessary stop and frisk, search, threat of violence or other escalation is removed from everyday life on campus for all members of the community.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Executive Officer of the SSSP will pen a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*, with duplicates sent to the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the *Huffington Post*, the National Public Radio (NPR), the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Washington Post*, universities considering founding or expanding armed police forces, and the University of California Office of the President (UCOP) on the dangers presented by an increasingly militarized and armed campus police force, and which outlines the dangers police have posed to the student body in the past, based in rigorous and empirical data drawn from historical and social research.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the SSSP will reassert in the public statement our commitment to fairness, equity, and equality by standing in solidarity with marginalized and hyper-policed students and communities, and calling for the

development of skilled alternative student services that are not dependent on police intervention.

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