End the Militarization of the Police

Whereas the militarization of police forces adversely affects public safety, welfare, civil rights and civil liberties, and increases the propensity of police to overreact and [resort to violence](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/2053168017712885) [without effectively](https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/115/37/9181.full.pdf) reducing crime;

Whereas the militarization of police is a facet of structural racism that contributes to the devaluation and loss of Black lives and the lives of Indigenous and other People of Color (BIPOC);

Whereas the loss of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color’s lives to police killings has galvanized a nation and the world to demand an end to the militarization of our communities;

Whereas the Pentagon’s 1033 program has sent $7 billion worth of military equipment to more than 8,000 law enforcement agencies in Alameda County and across the country since 1990, including tracked and armored vehicles, drones, assault and other rifles and rifle sights, grenade launchers, chemical weapons, bayonets, night-vision goggles, drones and other weapons, equipment and supplies designed for military combat;

Whereas the acquisition of military-grade arms and equipment by local police forces contributes to the militarism of police while padding the profit margins of military-industrial corporations that manufacture and distribute military-grade arms and other military equipment;

Whereas cities and counties must allocate funds from their budgets to purchase such militarized equipment and, for the 1033 program, to transport, maintain and train officers to use the equipment, diverting local funds from urgently needed community investments;

Whereas the vast majority of current police encounters could best be addressed by de-escalation and social services rather than the use of force or the presence of armed officers;

Whereas [it has been shown](https://www.aclu.org/issues/criminal-law-reform/reforming-police/war-comes-home?redirect=feature/war-comes-home) that police forces have increasingly engaged in paramilitary tactics that target Black, Brown and Indigenous communities disproportionately;

Whereas a primary stated purpose of the Pentagon’s 1033 program is to engage in counter-drug activities, which has created a “warrior” mentality among police officers, who then are prone to view the communities they serve as a “battle space” and all its residents as potential hostile combatants, thereby turning a force that should protect and serve into one that functions and is seen by many community members as an adversarial repressive occupying force;

Whereas a growing consensus across the political spectrum recognizes that the so-called *War on Drugs* has had debilitating effects on communities, including mass incarceration and a failure to invest appropriately in substance-use treatment, healthcare and community health services;

Whereas the military-grade equipment provided to local police departments or purchased directly by them is a direct result of misplaced spending priorities that overfund the military and underfund communities, in direct parallel to local overinvestment in police forces at the expense of communities;

*[P.2 - End the Militarization of Police]*

Whereas local and national leaders have spoken out clearly about the need to demilitarize our police forces, particularly in the context of growing understanding of the institutional racist underpinnings of such militarization;

Whereas the Poor People's Campaign, the Friends Committee on National Legislation, the American Friends Service Committee, and numerous members of Congress, including members of the Bay Area Congressional delegation, have called for an end to the provision of militarized weapons and equipment to police forces as essential to demilitarizing communities and reducing instances of police violence;

Whereas the Oakland City Council is presently considering an ordinance to control all militarized equipment that the Oakland Police Department wants to acquire or to continue to use, and that ordinance has been unanimously approved by the Oakland Police Commission;

Therefore be it resolved that: the Alameda Labor Council urges the Alameda Board of Supervisors and city councils of all cities of Alameda County to identify military-grade equipment in use by law enforcement agencies in their jurisdictions, and to refuse to accept or purchase military-grade or similar weapons and equipment under the Pentagon's 1033, Homeland Security, or any similar program, and if such military equipment has previously been acquired, to return all remaining military equipment currently in their possession to the relevant authority; and

Be it further resolved that the Alameda Labor Council urges the Oakland City Council to adopt the ordinance before it, previously approved by the Oakland Police Commission, to control all military equipment;

Be it further resolved, that the County and its Sheriff’s Office, and each city Police Department, respectively, should cease cooperation, if any, with or participation in Pentagon’s 1033 program or any other similar program which makes military-grade weapons and equipment available to local law enforcement agencies, and cease cooperation with other law enforcement agencies that continue to deploy such military-grade weapons and equipment when providing or receiving mutual aid;

Be it further resolved that the Alameda Labor Council supports Congressional adoption of [legislation](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/7143/) introduced by Rep. Nydia Velazquez to end the 1033 program; and *The* [*Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act*](https://www.paul.senate.gov/news/sens-paul-schatz-and-van-hollen-reintroduce-stop-militarizing-law-enforcement-act) put forth by Sens. Brian Schatz and Rand Paul to ban the transfer of weapons from the Pentagon to police and create similar prohibitions on militarized equipment through cash grants from the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security; and further supports [an amendment](https://www.schatz.senate.gov/press-releases/schatz-murkowski-harris-paul-introduce-legislation-to-help-end-police-militarization) to the National Defense Authorization Act that they along with Sens. Murkowski and Harris will introduce to end the transfer of tear gas, armor-piercing firearms and ammunition, bayonets, grenade launchers and grenades, combat tracked vehicles, drones and other offensive military weapons and equipment from the Pentagon to local law enforcement agencies; and further supports [Rep. Ro Khanna’s bill](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4359) to deny Justice Department grants to states and localities that don’t adopt stricter use-of-force legislation or policies.

*[P.3 - End the Militarization of Police]*

Be it finally resolved, that a copy of this resolution be made available to all Alameda Labor Council affiliates and the California Labor Federation with a request for concurrence; and to the members of the County Board of Supervisors, to the mayors and councils of all municipalities within the jurisdiction of the Council, and to members of the Bay Area Congressional delegation.

*Submitted 7/6/20 by Michael Eisenscher, Delegate, Peralta Federation of Teachers/AFT 1603*