

MOTION

PUBLIC SAFETY

JAN 23 2009

A recent demonstration in Westwood led to an unfortunate incident in which a Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officer was struck in the head by a protester with a wooden sign. This officer was injured and hospitalized due to the fact he was not wearing a helmet. When responding to the scene of protests, rallies, and other demonstrations, LAPD officers often outfit themselves with tactical gear such as helmets, gas masks, and other equipment. On certain occasions, including the Westwood incident, some officers have interpreted Department policies to mean that they should refrain from protecting themselves with such gear due to the psychological impact its appearance may have on crowds.

While all aspects of crowd management are important to consider, the possible psychological effect that tactical gear may have on demonstrators is significantly outweighed by the critical safety function this equipment serves for LAPD officers. If officer safety is jeopardized, then so is the safety of all individuals participating in a public demonstration. The Department's own Emergency Operations Guide, under the heading *Guidelines for Crowd Management and Crowd Control*, highlights this fact with a special safety message called out in bold print:

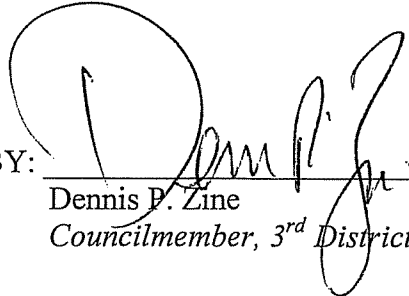
“DO NOT assign officers without helmets, vests and batons to crowd control missions.”

For the safety of LAPD officers and the members of the public they are charged to protect, all participants in demonstrations must have a clear expectation of how such events will be handled by the Department. Accordingly, LAPD should maintain consistent policies in this regard, including the use of protective gear by officers. Finally, these policies should be regularly communicated to all interested parties.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Los Angeles Police Department be requested to report to the Public Safety Committee with a detailed accounting of the events that took place during the January 10, 2009 protest in Westwood that resulted in an officer suffering a head injury without the protection of a helmet.

I FURTHER MOVE that the Los Angeles Police Department be requested to present a concurrent report on its policies with regard to the preparation and equipment of officers assigned to crowd control missions, including criteria for the use or non-use of helmets and other tactical gear, for the safety of officers and the general public alike.

PRESENTED BY:

  
Dennis P. Zine  
Councilmember, 3<sup>rd</sup> District

JAN 23 2009

SECONDED BY:



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