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July 28, 2015

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Heather Knight  
City Hall Reporter  
San Francisco Chronicle  
901 Mission Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Dear Ms. Knight,

After reading your July 17, 2015 article "No filter in officers' Internet musings" I felt compelled to offer a response because your reporting appears to be extremely selective with only half truths. I applaud you for reading the SFPOA Facebook page and the SFPOA Journal but if this was investigative reporting then your research did not go far enough. You make reference to postings and articles but you either ignored or conveniently did not report relevant facts listed on the POA Facebook page and in the POA Journal that counter the one sided column that you printed.

The POA Facebook posting about the murder of Kate Steinle was posted on July 6th. You were able to find this entry but to do so you would have to pass over the posting on July 15th which praises a POA member for participating in a POA campaign to find an organ donor for a sick young African American man. You also had to pass over the posting on July 16th which announced POA financial grants for neighborhood improvement programs. These grants will primarily go to worthy projects in economically depressed neighborhoods of the City.

If you investigated a bit further you would have also discovered articles highlighting our members tutoring youth and going the extra distance for some of the most vulnerable victims and residents of our community. You also would have discovered how the POA offered immediate financial assistance to a family of Central American immigrants who lost everything in a Mission District fire in January 2015. It was a member of the SFPD & POA who saved a boy and his dog from the inferno. Members of the POA then helped this family find housing and took them on a shopping spree to help them get back on their feet.

You made reference to columns in the April and May editions of the POA Journal. To find those specific columns you must have gone through the publication page by page. Did you miss the documentation of the POA making a \$5,000 donation to Operation Genesis where African American youth in the City will have the opportunity to travel to west African to explore their heritage? How about the funding that the POA provides to our military personnel who are passing through SFO after serving overseas or the POA's financial support for Family House to provide comfort for those battling cancer at UCSF? What about the continued support of Blessings In A Backpack which offers nutritious meals to the youth of Visitation Valley while they are not in school or what about the 15 members of the SFPD and POA who were recently honored by the San Francisco Lions Club for their heroic acts? All of these articles were in the same editions of the Journal but they too were not mentioned.

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Point is, we (POA) involve ourselves in meaningful community efforts without recognition but as a reporter if you are commenting on our social media/communication efforts you should state all that is transpiring.

You correctly reported that the POA has condemned the racist and homophobic text messaging that has taken place between a small number of our members but questioned why the POA is providing attorneys for these members. First of all, that specific investigation involves 7 members, not 14. The reason why they are provided representation is because of due process. Yes, even peace officers have the constitutional right to administrative representation during a department investigation. This is outlined in section 3300-3313 of the Government Code for the State of California and has been the law since 1978.

You then go on and speak of the POA letter to the DCCC. Once again you were very one sided in your selection of quotes. Did you even consider reporting that the POA reached an agreement with the SFLC and the DCCC regarding the Black Lives Matter resolution? The POA did not oppose that resolution because it was fair and reasonable. The POA made that very clear in the same letter but that too was overlooked.

In early June 2015 you, along with 54 other members of the media, were invited by the POA to attend a two hour session at the SFPD Academy to gain a better understanding of what we do, why we do it, and how we do it. You, along with 49 other members of the media, never responded to our invitation. This would have been a perfect opportunity for those in the media to get an in depth understanding of policing in our great City. Unfortunately, due to the lack of interest by the media, it only sends a message to the men and women serving and protecting the residents of San Francisco that perhaps the complete and full story is not being told to the public.

I find your article to be one sided and unbalanced. This is hardly what any reasonable reader would call fair and impartial. You have cherry picked facts in order to sensationalize your article in an attempt to label the POA, and its members, as being racist. Well that simply is not the case.

I would ask that you seek to understand what our officers go through, their extensive training, psychological testing and the demands on what is an extremely difficult job. I am not naive and understand all people make mistakes, including cops, but as a reporter I would expect that you would attempt to cover all sides to give the readers a true understanding of the facts at hand.



Martin Halloran  
SFPOA President

cc: Lois Kazakoff, Deputy Editor, San Francisco Chronicle