

**August 26, 2015**

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Ben Tulchin, Corey O’Neil and Kiel Brunner; Tulchin Research

**Re:** **California Statewide Survey Finds Voters Demand More Transparency in Police Misconduct Cases**

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Tulchin Research recently conducted a California statewide survey on behalf of the ACLU of California Center for Advocacy & Policy to assess how likely voters think and feel about criminal justice and law enforcement, especially with regard to police misconduct. With the issue in the news in recent months due to high profile events, this research aims to gauge voter sentiments towards these issues in California specifically and help inform elected officials in Sacramento about the public’s desire to reform how police interact with the public, especially in communities of color.

The poll found California voters want more transparency with how police misconduct cases are handled. Specifically, they demand public access to investigations of acts of misconduct and use of force by police. Voters see body cameras on police officers as a helpful tool in making policing more transparent and for holding officers accountable for how they interact with the public, especially in cases of misconduct and use of force. Furthermore, voters want access to the footage, especially when force or misconduct is involved.

We provide below a summary of the key findings from the survey.

### **Public Disclosure of Police Misconduct Investigations**

Voters in California strongly favor making public the findings from investigations into police misconduct as over three-quarters of voters (79 percent yes) support this proposed requirement. This overwhelming support for reform carries across all ethnicities within the state including more than nine out of ten African American voters (91 percent), five out of six Latino and Asian voters (84 percent) and over three-quarters of white voters (76 percent). Support for public access to investigations reports also carries across party lines as strong majorities of Democrats (87 percent), Republicans (67 percent) and independent voters (78 percent) support the proposal.

The table below shows the results among likely voters.

### Support for Public Access to Police Misconduct Investigations

*In cases where police commit misconduct, do you think the public should have access to the findings and conclusions of investigations into these acts of misconduct?*

	Yes
<b>All California Voters</b>	<b>79%</b>
<b><i>Ethnicity</i></b>	
<b>Blacks</b>	91%
<b>Latinos</b>	84%
<b>Asians</b>	84%
<b>Whites</b>	76%
<b><i>Party</i></b>	
<b>Democrats</b>	87%
<b>Republicans</b>	67%
<b>Independents</b>	78%

### Proposals for Improving Police Transparency

When it comes to police transparency and accountability, it's clear that voters are ready for major reforms that allow the public access to investigations of police misconduct. **Nearly two-thirds of likely voters (64 percent) support public access to misconduct investigation reports in all cases where an officer is accused of misconduct.** Strong majorities of voters across the state support this transparency requirement, which includes voters from every key demographic group:

- Both men (67 percent support) and women (61 percent) in California show strong support for this transparency reform;
- Support is strong among all ethnic groups in the state including Asian (79 percent), African American (78 percent), Latino (67 percent) and white (60 percent) voters;
- Bridging the partisan divide, Democratic (68 percent), Republican (56 percent) and independent (65 percent) voters all broadly support allowing public access to police misconduct investigations in all cases where an officer is accused of misconduct; and
- Voters across all regions of the state strongly support access to investigations in all police misconduct cases as the greater Los Angeles area (70 percent) shows the strongest support, followed by voters in LA County (66 percent), the San Francisco Bay Area (65 percent), San Diego County (61 percent), the Central Valley (56 percent) and the Sacramento/North region (53 percent).

The table below shows this broad support among these various groups of likely voters.

### Support for Public Access to Police Misconduct Investigations

*Allow public access to investigations into police officer misconduct, including findings and any discipline imposed, in all cases where an officer is accused of misconduct.*

*... please tell me whether you support or oppose that approach.*

	Support	Oppose	Supp-Opp
<b>All California Voters</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>+41</b>
<b><i>Gender</i></b>			
<b>Women</b>	61%	24%	<b>+37</b>
<b>Men</b>	67%	22%	<b>+44</b>
<b><i>Ethnicity</i></b>			
<b>Blacks</b>	77%	11%	<b>+66</b>
<b>Latinos</b>	67%	20%	<b>+47</b>
<b>Asians</b>	79%	11%	<b>+69</b>
<b>Whites</b>	60%	26%	<b>+35</b>
<b><i>Party</i></b>			
<b>Democrats</b>	68%	17%	<b>+51</b>
<b>Republicans</b>	56%	33%	<b>+23</b>
<b>Independents</b>	65%	23%	<b>+42</b>
<b><i>Region</i></b>			
<b>LA County</b>	66%	19%	<b>+48</b>
<b>LA Area</b>	70%	21%	<b>+49</b>
<b>Bay Area</b>	65%	19%	<b>+46</b>
<b>San Diego</b>	61%	28%	<b>+32</b>
<b>Sacramento/ North</b>	53%	33%	<b>+20</b>
<b>Central Valley</b>	56%	30%	<b>+26</b>

Beyond this strong backing for providing more transparency of police misconduct investigations, there is even greater support for providing public access, specifically in cases where misconduct is confirmed (71 percent support), compared to just 18 percent who oppose and 10 percent who are undecided. Voters would also like to see investigation reports made public for any incident where the police engage in serious use of force whether or not the police acted inappropriately (64 percent) while just under a quarter of voters oppose this proposal (23 percent).

Voters are also interested in access to the disciplinary and public complaint process of police misconduct as two-thirds of voters (66 percent) support allowing public access for hearings on police discipline or civilian complaints held by police departments and local hearing boards. This proposal is opposed by 22 percent of voters and 11 percent are undecided.

The table below shows the results among likely voters for these transparency proposals.

### Support for Public Access to Additional Aspects of Police Misconduct Investigations

*Here are some different approaches to making law enforcement more accountable and transparent. For each one, please tell me whether you support or oppose that approach.*

	Support	Oppose	Und.	Supp – Opp
<i><b>Allow public access to investigations into police officer misconduct, including findings and any discipline imposed, only if the investigation finds that the officer did engage in misconduct.</b></i>	71%	18%	10%	<b>+53</b>
<i><b>Allow public access into investigations of serious uses of force by police, including findings and any discipline, whether or not the investigation determines the officer acted appropriately.</b></i>	64%	23%	13%	<b>+41</b>
<i><b>Allow hearings on police discipline or civilian complaints held by police departments or local hearing boards to be open to the public.</b></i>	66%	22%	11%	<b>+44</b>

### Police Body Cameras

There has been a national conversation surrounding requirements that police officers wear body cameras to record their interactions with the public as an element for improving transparency and how police interact with the public. In California, support for requiring police officers to wear body cameras is nearly universal as more than five out of six voters (84 percent) favor this requirement compared to just eight percent who oppose. This broad support for body cameras holds across a myriad of demographic groups:

- A body camera requirement proposal finds support from 86 percent of women and 82 percent of men;
- African American voters (91 percent favor) show the highest support among ethnic groups, while Latino (87 percent), white (83 percent) and Asian (80 percent) voters also show resounding support for recording police interactions and stops;
- Support holds across party lines as Democrats (86 percent favor), Republicans (81 percent) and independent voters (83 percent) are all in favor; and
- Support remains strong across every region of the state including Southern California excluding Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area (each with 84 percent support). Support is also strong in the Central Valley (83 percent), LA County (81 percent) and the Sacramento and Northern region (74 percent).

The table below shows this broad support among these various groups of likely voters.

### Body Camera Requirement Proposal

*Do you favor or oppose requiring police officers to wear body cameras to record interactions with people?*

	Favor	Oppose	Fav- Opp
<b>All California Voters</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>+76</b>
<b><i>Gender</i></b>			
<b>Women</b>	86%	6%	<b>+80</b>
<b>Men</b>	82%	9%	<b>+72</b>
<b><i>Ethnicity</i></b>			
<b>Blacks</b>	91%	3%	<b>+88</b>
<b>Latinos</b>	87%	8%	<b>+78</b>
<b>Asians</b>	80%	5%	<b>+75</b>
<b>Whites</b>	83%	8%	<b>+75</b>
<b><i>Party</i></b>			
<b>Democrats</b>	86%	6%	<b>+80</b>
<b>Republicans</b>	81%	9%	<b>+72</b>
<b>Independents</b>	83%	8%	<b>+74</b>
<b><i>Region</i></b>			
<b>LA County</b>	81%	6%	<b>+81</b>
<b>LA Area</b>	84%	6%	<b>+79</b>
<b>Bay Area</b>	84%	7%	<b>+77</b>
<b>San Diego</b>	84%	8%	<b>+76</b>
<b>Sacramento/ North</b>	74%	14%	<b>+60</b>
<b>Central Valley</b>	83%	8%	<b>+75</b>

When it comes to the public release of footage captured by body cameras, voters want access to the video for a wide range of circumstances though the level of support depends on the circumstances of the footage and type of interaction.

- At the highest level, nearly three-quarters of voters (74 percent) agree that footage should be publicly accessible in any case where an officer is reported for misconduct.
- Nearly the same portion of voters (72 percent) agrees that footage should be made public any time an officer uses force.
- A solid majority of voters (57 percent) agrees that body camera footage should be made public anytime it is requested.
- In the case of the most aggressive reform tested, more than half of voters (52 percent) agree that all footage should be made publicly accessible regardless of the context or circumstances of the interaction.

### Public Access to Body Camera Footage

*In thinking about allowing police officers to use body cameras to record their interactions with people, please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements?*

	Agree	Disagree	Und.	Agree – Disagree
The public should have access to body camera footage from police officers in situations where an <b><u>officer was reported for misconduct.</u></b>	74%	16%	10%	<b>+58</b>
The public should have access to body camera footage from police officers in situations where the <b><u>officer used force.</u></b>	72%	18%	10%	<b>+54</b>
The public should have access to body camera footage from police <b><u>upon request.</u></b>	57%	26%	16%	<b>+31</b>
The public should have access to <b><u>all footage</u></b> as opposed to just some footage.	52%	32%	16%	<b>+20</b>

### Conclusion

Our research finds that voters across the state have strong convictions about the need for reforms to improve transparency and accountability in law enforcement. Likely voters in California are especially interested in shedding light on interactions that involve reports of police misconduct and use of force. This support exists across nearly all demographic groups and is especially true when investigations confirm misconduct. There is also strong support for requiring police officers to wear body cameras and to make the footage publicly available, especially when misconduct or force is used. This data indicate that voters are responding to recent cases of police misconduct around the country and would like to see reforms implemented to reduce police misconduct and help restore public confidence in law enforcement.

**Survey Methodology:** *Tulchin Research conducted a statewide survey in California among 900 likely November 2016 voters, including a statewide base sample of 800 voters and an oversample of 100 African American voters. The oversample of African American voters provides increased statistical confidence for that specific demographic group. Interviews were conducted online from July 10-14, 2015. The margin of error for the statewide base sample is +/- 3.46 percent.*