

Does Your Local Justice System Measure Up in Responding to Violence Against Women?



Template Public Record Request Letters for Obtaining the Statistics You Need, and Notes on How to Use Them

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Part 1 ~ Introduction

With local justice officials often eager to overstate their progress in dealing with violence against women, communities need to get the real facts. The following guide provides template public record request letters you can use in your community to get relevant statistics. This guide also provides notes on key points in each of these letters, and some general points for interpreting and presenting the statistics you obtain.

Your State's Public Records Act:

It's not necessary for you to know the details of your state's public records law. But two things you should know:

* The name of your state public records law. (Some states refer to this law as their Public Records Act, other states refer to it as their Freedom of Information Act. But all states have a law requiring that public agencies state agencies such as police and district attorneys provide information on their activities upon request by the public.)

Here is an easy to use quick guide to the public records law in all 50 states:
<http://www.foiadvocates.com/records.html>

* The second thing you should know is the number of days your state public records law allows a public agency to respond to your request.

One easy way to get answers to any questions you may have about your state's public records law, without having to read the law, is to ask a local journalist. Most every journalist is regularly making use of public record laws as part of their work.

Here is a more detailed guide that reporters use to obtain information on using public records law in any of the 50 states:
<http://www.rcfp.org/open-government-guide>

Quick Start

If you need to quickly get a set of violence against women statistics from your police, sheriff, or district attorney, you can go directly to the template letters linked below. Copy and paste the letter into your word program, or 'save as' text file. Simply insert your local information where indicated in the red bolded letters in parentheses, and send out the letter(s).

[POLICE: Template Public Record Request Letter](#)

[SHERIFF: Template Public Record Request Letter](#)

[DISTRICT ATTORNEY: Template Public Request Letter](#)

Each of the three template letters contains requests on many aspects of the system's responses to violence against women and children. Naturally you can eliminate any section that doesn't pertain to your interests. And, of course, you can add items, too.

In order to get the best picture of how violence against women crimes are handled in your community you'll need to send out a letter to each of the police departments in your county, a

letter to the Sheriff's department in your county, and a letter to the district attorney.

PART 2

POLICE:

[Police Template Public Request Letter](#)

NOTES on Police Letter:

Sex/Race Composition Section:

*** **“sworn law enforcement officers”**: When requesting information on the number of officers always ask for “sworn law enforcement officers”. This is to prevent agencies from including cadets, corrections officers, or other non sworn personnel in their counts, something agencies are too often prone to do in order to falsely inflate the number of female and minority officers.

Keep in mind, however, that even when you ask for “sworn law enforcement officers” some agencies may still include non sworn personnel in order to inflate their figures. One way to double check, particularly if it's a smaller agency, is to ask someone close to the department if the results you receive look accurate to them.

* **How many Hispanics? How many Latinas?** In our sample letter we asked for the number of Hispanic officers and the number of Latina officers. This is because a large segment of our population is Hispanic, and because we were already deeply concerned that Hispanic females, in particular, are grossly under-represented on our police officers.

Naturally, you can adapt the sex/race questions to reflect the most significant demographics in your community.

*** **How many females/males, etc. rank sergeant and above**: This question is critical because so often agencies load up on females and people of color at the bottom ranks of the police hierarchies while never allowing them to advance to positions of influence and power.

*** **Domestic Violence Section**: Remember, you don't have to ask all the same questions we've asked in this sample letter. At the very least, however, you should ask, How many domestic violence calls for service, how many domestic violence crime reports were written, and how many of those cases were sent to the District Attorney's Office for review.

*****Rape and Child Sexual Abuse**: When the criminal justice system refers to rape they are almost always excluding the rapes of any one under 14 years of age. Unlawful sexual penetration of a minor is categorized as ‘child molestation’ or ‘child sexual abuse’. This is unfortunate, in one sense, since it breaks up the overall picture of people's understanding of sex crimes. Nonetheless, it's important to be aware of this when requesting your sex crime statistics.

*** **Prostitution/Pimping/Sex Trafficking**: In California, both the buying and selling of sex are

identical violations under the same penal code section. In addition to the objectionable equating of these two acts, it creates the obvious problem that you can't break out how many prostitutes were arrested vs. the number of johns. The only way we could get a close approximation was to ask how many females were arrested for prostitution and how many males were arrested.

(Sadly, across the country, there are at least six times as many women arrested for prostitution offenses as men. This despite the fact that it is estimated that for every prostitute there are at least 30 johns.)

SHERIFF:

[Sheriff Public Record Request Letter](#)

Notes on Sheriff Letter:

The above notes on the police letter apply as well to the Sheriff letter, with two important additions needed.

1. Corrections Officers: In addition to law enforcement functions, Sheriff's departments also generally run the county jail. In most cases, Sheriff department corrections personnel are NOT sworn law enforcement officers. The problem is unless it's made perfectly clear in the letter, as the sample letter does, that you want corrections officers excluded from the count, many Sheriff's departments will be tempted to include them in order to inflate the numbers of women and minority race officers.

If, as is sometimes the case, the corrections officers in your Sheriff's department are also sworn law enforcement officers, this request for their exclusion is obviously not necessary.

2. Contracted Township Deputies: In many counties there are townships that are too small to support their own police departments. These townships often contract with the local Sheriff's department to serve as the town's police force. Nonetheless, the Sheriff's deputies that are working as the town's police as still employed by the Sheriff's department, still supervised by the Sheriff's department, and still accountable to the Sheriff's department.

Furthermore, all crimes reported in such a township are the responsibility of the Sheriff's department.

This is why the sample Sheriff letter asks specifically that the statistics include the officers working for the contracted township(s), and that the crime statistics include the crimes registered in the contracted township(s).

DISTRICT ATTORNEY:

[District Attorney Template Public Request Letter](#)

The district attorney's office in your county receives completed crime reports from the police and sheriff's department throughout the county. The district attorney decides whether or not to file charges in each case, which charges to file, and then proceeds to prosecute the case in court if charges have been filed.

In order to get a full picture of how your community justice system is responding to violence against women, you need to know how your district attorney is handling the cases it receives from your police agencies and sheriff's department.

Sex/Race Composition: As with your police agencies, the sex and race composition of your district attorney's office is revealing in terms of the biases and capabilities of the office for dealing with all segments of the community.

Keep in mind that the only individuals in a district attorney's who are empowered to charge and prosecute crimes are the sworn deputy district attorneys. That's why it's important to specify that distinction in your letter, so the office doesn't inflate their numbers by including un-empowered personnel.

District Attorney Prosecution Record Keeping Methods: Not every district attorney's office maintains their violence against women statistics in precisely the identical way we've laid out the questions in the request letter. However, the variations in methods will generally be so slight that the questions as stated should be answerable by your local DA. One way to derail any attempt by your DA's office to find an excuse to deny your request is to call the office within a week of sending your request. Ask to speak to the records dept. person handling the request, and ask if they have any questions or concerns regarding the request.

What to Do if Officials Don't Respond in the Time Frame Required by Law...

State public record laws require that public agencies respond to your request within a given number of days. In California, for example, public agencies have ten days to respond either by supplying the information requested, or, by responding in writing with the reasons they believe justify denying the request.

Among public officials, law enforcement officials are especially prone to violating these laws by attempting to withhold records from the public. This is due, in part, to a culture of secrecy that exists in many law enforcement agencies. And, that culture of secrecy is fostered, in part, because, law enforcement, in fact, is legally permitted to withhold information pertaining to any ongoing investigations. The culture of secrecy is also fostered by the overall lack of accountability for all kinds of law enforcement misconduct.

Nonetheless, it's important to always keep in mind that there is no legitimate reason to withhold crime statistics from the public. Just don't be surprised if they try. One way to avoid attempts by an agency to delay or deny requested information is to get in phone contact with the records department early on, within days after they've likely received your request. Ask for the person who is handling your request. And ask that person if they have any questions or concerns

regarding the request.

If you begin to run into obstruction:

1. Remember, crime statistics are always open to the public. There's no gray area here, and no acceptable rationale for withholding existing crime data from any member of the public. The one excuse a public agency may come up with is that they don't keep the data as requested in a particular item. For example, some of our police agencies don't keep a record of how many rape/medical exams they undertake in a year. In general, if you are requesting an item of data an agency has not already generated, the law usually says you have the choice of paying to have the agency generate that data, or you can simply agree to bypass the question.

But remember! With only a rare exception here and there, virtually all items requested in these letters are already computed by your local agencies. You have an undisputed right to obtain that computed data. And there is no valid reason for any agency to deny you that data within the time frame required by law.

2. If you sense obstruction from the person handling your request, go immediately to the head of the records department.

3. If you sense obstruction from the head of the records department, complain immediately in writing to the police chief, the Sheriff, or the DA.

4. If you sense obstruction from the chief, the Sheriff, or the DA, complain immediately in writing to the city council, the board of supervisors, and/or the press.

5. If you're still having trouble getting a proper response, a very good source of help is any journalist in your community. Remember, journalists are routinely relying on use of public record laws. They all have experience in making sure their requests get responded to in due time. So call a local journalist and ask them what courses of action you might take.

There is just no excuse for our public agencies to deny the public information!

PART 3 ~ Evaluating and Communicating the Results

When you receive responses to your requests, you'll want to compile the data in a way that will be most meaningful and most understandable to the community.

The following are some tips for doing that and an example of how we presented this data to our community.

1. You don't have to use all the data you've gathered. In fact, deluging people with too much data is almost certain to confuse people and cause them to miss the main points. That doesn't mean that all the extra data you've gathered is useless.

The ‘extra’ data, in fact, is essential for deepening your understanding of what’s happening and for pointing you towards the best conclusions. It comes in handy, too, for answering people’s questions. The ‘extra data’ is also the basis for fleshing out the nuances and explanations you give in the text that accompanies your presentation of the data.

2. The sex/race composition data of your local law enforcement agencies are generally self explanatory and easy to present. It’s a good idea to also provide along with the agency data a table of the sex/race composition of the general population. That information is available from your local census data which is available everywhere on the internet.

3. Present your crime statistics in a way that it’s easy for people to understand. It’s the crime data that can so often be confusing to people. Keep in mind that most of the public has only a vague understanding of how a criminal case proceeds through the system. If you provide too many statistics people can become overwhelmed and the value of the statistics is lost.

We’ve found that the best way to present the violence against women and children crime data is to take a given crime category (such as rape), graphically lay out the time period, the number of crime (rape) reports, the number of reports sent to the DA’s office, and the number of (rape) convictions.

For example,

Rape (Adult Rape) Cases (Sonoma County, CA)

YEAR	Cases Reported to Police (all departments)	Number of Reports Sent to the DA	Number of Rape Convictions
2011	179	41	16

4. Numbers don’t tell the whole story. By keeping the crime data numbers to a minimum people can come away feeling like they’ve gotten a grasp of what’s going on. Still, there are always circumstances and nuances that are important for fully understanding the law enforcement dynamic. Make sure to accompany your tables with a paragraph or two that fleshes out the numbers. That’s where the rest of the data you’ve gathered can be so informative.

5. Don’t forget to tell people what they can do about it. People are bombarded from morning till night with travesties. If you can give people one or two simple things they can do, or at least give them a connection for getting involved, that’s what make’s the difference.

Sample Presentation of Results:

The following pages taken from our newsletter are how we presented the crime statistic wrap up we did in our community in March 2012. It’s just one example of how you can use the statistics you obtain to highlight ongoing problems and suggest needed remedies



Women's Justice Center * June 2012 * Centro de Justicia para Mujeres
 PO Box 7510, Santa Rosa, CA 95407 * Tel. (707) 575-3150 * Vol XXXVI

❁ Women & Girls Count! ❁

Statistics has long suffered the stigma of being the stepchild of higher math. And many a student will roll their eyes when told to take the course. But when it comes to drilling down through the murky sediments of myth and fabrications, there's nothing that can nail the bedrock of fact like a good set of stats.

Every few years Women's Justice Center sends out a set of public record requests to our local law enforcement agencies with the goal of tracking two key indicators of our justice system response to women. First, how is our local law enforcement doing in handling violence against women cases? And, second, how is our local law enforcement doing in terms of integrating women into law enforcement work?

$$\sum_{k=0}^{\infty}$$



Answering the latter of the two questions is by far the easier of the two, as the raw numbers themselves pretty well tell the story. But even here, we've dug a little deeper this year to see a little better exactly where and why our police agencies are failing so dramatically to make much of a dent at all in ending the male monopoly on police powers throughout Sonoma County.

Tracking the law enforcement responses to rape, domestic violence, child abuse, and prostitution poses more complexities. There still isn't complete uniformity among the agencies as to how they categorize the various offenses within each of these crimes, though this has improved steadily over time.

A more formidable problem for getting the complete picture stems from one of the all too common police abuses in violence against women cases, and that is a failure to write any crime report at all.

When no report is written, of course, the victims in those cases are not only being denied protection and justice, they're also being denied critical existence in the records. Unfortunately, aside from a costly fishing expedition through all 911 calls, there's no way to quantify the number of such cases. We only know of the practice when random victims happen to call and tell us their stories, as they often do. At which point we can trace back into police calls and verify the stories.

But, whatever the deviations from pinpoint accuracy in this issue's statistical snapshot, we think you'll agree, the numbers are more than sufficient for anyone to safely conclude ~ Sonoma County women and children deserve so much better! There's just no excuse!





Sonoma County Police Forces ~ March 2012 Sex/Race Composition

All Police, 86% White, 91% Male ~ Rank Sgt. & above, 95% Male
 Dec. 2011 SRJC Police Academy Grads, 95% Male

Compiled by Women's Justice Center

www.justicewomen.com ~ www.ayudaparamujeres.com

	Total Sworn Officers	Females	Females SGT. & Above	Males SGT. & Above	Hispanic	Hispanic Female	Asian	African American	Native American
Sheriff's Dept * (includes Windsor and Sonoma)	224	17	2	38	24	6	1	5	1
Santa Rosa Police	163	14	1	28	15	0	5	2	2
Petaluma Police	63	5	1	14	3	0	2	1	0
Rohnert Park	56	3	0	15	3	0	4	1	1
Sebastopol	18	1	0	5	1	1	0	0	0
Healdsburg	16	4	0	5	3	0	0	1	0
Cloverdale	11	2	0	3	1	0	0	0	0
SRJC Police	11	1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0
Cotati	11	1	0	4	2	1	0	0	0
SSU Police	11	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total Son. Co. Police	584	51	6	117	53	8	12	11	4
Total Son. Co. Police %	100%	8.6%	4.9%	95.1%	9%	1.4%	2%	1.9%	0.7%

Note: *. Statistics for Windsor and Sonoma Police are included in the Sheriff's Department statistics because Windsor and Sonoma Police are Sheriff's deputies contracted out to the towns of Windsor and Sonoma.

Dec 2011- SRJC Police Academy Grads	Total	Female	Hispanic	Asian	African American	Native American		
	57	3	4	2	1	2		

Sonoma County Population (2010 Census)	Female	Caucasian	Hispanic	Hisp-female	Afr-American	Asian	Native American
	51%	77%	25%	12.5%	1.6%	4%	1.3%



Notes



Though we gathered multiple dimensions of violence against women and children crime statistics from each local police department, in this publication we've chosen three indicator statistics for each crime which we thought most accurately illustrated the treatment of those crimes on the path to justice. We'd be happy to pass on the more detailed data to any one who requests it.

One significant take away from all these figures, is that a good 75% of reported sexual assaults in Sonoma County are being buried in police departments without ever being reviewed by the DA. As such, these cases are being summarily denied justice by police. And a significant percentage of domestic violence cases are being similarly disposed of, though for reasons discussed further on, the exact percentage is more difficult to assess.

In 1995, then SRPD Chief Sal Rosano authored a county-wide domestic violence policy which required that all domestic violence police reports be sent to the DA for review. The obvious purpose of this policy was to provide legal oversight and to overcome the historical tendency of police to disregard domestic violence.

Unforgivably, the Sonoma County Law Enforcement Chief's Association has since rescinded that policy. And despite many lobbying efforts on our part, police have never seriously even considered that policy for sex crimes.

We continue to maintain that in order to secure protection and justice for women in Sonoma County, an urgent and essential step is that law enforcement adopt an overall policy that all police crime reports of violence against women and children, including sex crimes, be sent to the DA for review.

Beware of the self-serving misinformation in which police claim that the cases shelved in police departments are the 'bottom of the barrel' cases lacking validity or sufficient evidence. Clearly, it's absurd on the face of it to claim that 75% of reported sexual assaults and thousands of domestic violence related calls are 'bottom of the barrel' cases. Moreover, having delved into the specifics of these cases for many years on behalf of victims, we can say unequivocally that the majority of these cases are perfectly legitimate cases. Their only 'problem' is that they either have victims police think they can get away with ignoring, or because officers simply didn't want to do the work of a proper investigation.

Sexual violence statistics: Without going into the fine points, rape crime statistics, in general, pertain to rape of adults, and child sexual assaults are **Cont. next page**

Forcible Rape (Adult Rape) Cases

YEAR	Adult Rapes Reported to Police	Number of Reports Sent to DA	Number of Rape Convictions
2011	175	41	16
2008	179	40	4

Child Sexual Assault Cases

YEAR	Child SA Reported to Police	Number of Reports Sent to DA	Sentenced to Prison
2011	239	65	13
2008	289	87	19

Domestic Violence

YEAR	DV Related Calls to Police	DV Reports Sent to DA	Total DV Convictions (Fel & Misd)
2011	7,082	1,542	489
2008	see dv notes	1,885	654

Prostitution

YEAR	Prostitution Arrests (for buy or sell)	Males	Females
2011	31	1	30
2008	21	1	20





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coded separately.

Is there progress in our rape prosecutions? At first glance the numbers appear to indicate some increase in prosecutions, however slight.

However, additional data we obtained shows the DA only filed 7 felony adult sexual assault cases in 2011. That may seem impossible given the 16 convictions, but what most likely happened is that an unusual number of cases had already been filed and were in progress at the beginning of the year, leading to a higher number of convictions than cases filed, and no answer to the question of whether rape prosecution rates are improved..

“Where are all the angry American women?”

Asked by Lemah Gbowee, winner of the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, at the Women in the World Summit on March 8, 2012



With such small changes in one direction or another, it will require a number of data sets to determine if change is significant or not. **Suffice it to say, however, that even at 16 rape convictions, we’re still not much advanced from the dozen or so rape convictions per year of two decades ago.**

Domestic Violence Statistics: The difficulty in interpreting the domestic violence statistics is twofold. The “*DV Related Calls to Police*” is an accurate enough number. But it includes a significant number of calls that don’t rise to the level of criminal activity, such as simple verbal disputes. The “*DV Reports Sent to DA*” is also an accurate number, but it doesn’t include many cases which do, in fact, rise to a criminal level, but for which police either didn’t write a crime report, or didn’t forward the report to the DA for review.

H o w e v e r ,



despite the difficulties, there’s a couple of hard truths that jump irrefutably out of the statistics. **Out of the 1,542 domestic violence crime reports sent to the DA, less than a third resulted in any kind of conviction at all, felony or misdemeanor. After two decades of trainings, death reviews, lawsuits, petitions, and promises, those numbers are extremely discouraging and dangerous for the women of Sonoma County.**

Continues next page

National Institute of Justice Study on Police Attitudes Toward Rape and Rape Victims

Police often explain their paltry clearance rates in rape cases with familiar refrains that only add insult to injury. These cases, they say, "are difficult to prove", "are 'he said, she said'", "have uncooperative victims", etc.

But a recent 2010 National Institute of Justice study** of sex crime detectives and front line officers from multiple police agencies puts the blame squarely where it should be, and confirms what we have long observed.

The NIJ study finds that, indeed, police have learned to give "politically correct" answers about sexual assaults. But as the following excerpt from the study abstract makes clear, the mind set of most police is still locked and loaded against sex crimes victims, and worse, it’s stubbornly unwilling to change.

Quoting from the NIJ study abstract:

"Still, the findings from administering the rape scale to the officers indicate that despite many years of training, a large number of police officers still hold attitudes and opinions that undermine their ability to treat rape victims well. The officers were almost unanimously opposed to changing to a system of investigation and case processing that gives priority to protecting victims."

"Among the police officers in this study, there was virtually no interest in and some strong resistance to examining innovative and improved ways of investigating and managing rape cases. **The dominant theme in current investigative techniques is the presumption that victims are lying and the initial job of the investigators is to expose it.**" (emphasis ours)

** *Police Investigation of Rapes - Roadblocks and Solutions*, See abstract and link to pdf of full study text: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=254756>

from p 6

And just as disturbing, of the 7,082 “DV related related calls to police” in 2011, it is preposterous to believe, as the police have deemed, that 5,540 of these calls did not merit review by the DA. Granted, there are a few people who will call police over non criminal verbal domestic disputes, but not 5,540 people in one year in one Sonoma County.

And lest these numbers become simply an abstract matter of scorn, remember that it only takes one failure of police to properly follow through to end up with a murdered woman and motherless children, as has just happened, and is certainly seeded to happen again.

Child Sexual Abuse: Not all child sexual abuse crimes are felonies meriting a prison sentence, but most are. This is why we give the number of cases that were sentenced to prison, understanding that a number of the cases also ended in conviction to a lesser offense, in some cases correctly, and in some not. But it's the paltry 13 sent to prison out of 239 reported cases that tells the same story as the other stats. There is much work to be done, and miles to go before we sleep.

See Next Pages for Suggested Remedies

Three Home Town Remedies for Law Enforcement

Accountability

We don't have the mission or resources to undertake a campaign to install civilian review in Sonoma County. But we do have three remedies we believe will begin to make a difference.

We've suggested these and other changes many times before. What we

see now is that they must be mandated. One way that can be accomplished is by pressing our city councils and board of supervisors to sign on to these measures. If you agree and would like to participate in any way, give us a call, or email Taylor at tandersonstevonson@gmail.com.

That the Sonoma County Law Enforcement Chiefs' Association meetings be conducted on the public record, open to public attendance and input, under Brown Act type rules!

Every month the Sonoma County law enforcement chiefs - the police chiefs, Sheriff, DA, Probation chief, and more - get together to hammer out law enforcement issues and policies for the county. Astoundingly, they do so completely off the public record, behind closed doors. For a tangle of legal arguments, law enforcement is exempt from Brown Act open meeting requirements.

However, the key point here is that there is no law anywhere that prohibits the chiefs' meetings from obeying any or all of the Brown Act rules. All it would take would be a mandate from our local city councils and board of supervisors to put this in force.

It is unconscionable in a democracy that the debate and forging of our law enforcement policies is carried out in secret. With all the enormous behind-the-scenes powers already built into law enforcement activities, no community can afford to be so completely shut out of the process. As things stand now, citizens can, or course, individually or in groups meet with authorities, but that so atomizes citizen power, and so shields law enforcement response, as to make the input virtually powerless.



That All Sex Crimes Cases Reported to Police and Sheriff Must Be Sent to the DA for Review!

Many crimes get shelved by police without getting the proper attention they merit. But no category of crime is treated more poorly, more systematically, and with such deliberate indifference and animus, as sex crimes.

The full barbarity of our local law enforcement response to sex crimes can be seen in the compilation of public record statistics we did last Spring. In brief, over 75% of all sex

crimes reported to police in Sonoma County are never sent to the DA for review. They are buried in the police departments. Furthermore, rape prosecution rate in our county hasn't improved in over 20 years, despite protests, trainings, and more protests.

The full solution to this problem will require a radical dismantling of the patriarchal structure, culture, and composition of our law enforcement. But insisting that all cases be sent to the DA for review should begin to remedy some of the most flagrant refusals to investigate.

That civilian committees be established with sufficient authority to steer the recruitment, hiring, and promotion of law enforcement officers in their communities, at the police academy, and at the DA's office, as well as to establish criteria and training for the same within the confines of the law.

This third point begins to get at the origin and root causes of our law enforcement problems. Internal police culture is notoriously resistant to change. White male police powers will continue to clone themselves and their defects until communities reach in and break up the mold.

It starts with recruitment! And with some fairly obvious steps, such as changing recruitment messages, eliminating advantage points for military service, or abolishing the infamous wall which serves mainly to wash women out. The critical point is that the community's consciousness is already far out ahead of police thinking, and the community will drive the change.





The Unyielding White Male Control of Sonoma County Police Forces ☆☆☆

Causes and Consequences

Nearly two decades ago in 1993, over 8,000 community members signed a petition calling for more women on our local police forces. The petition was presented to the Board of Supervisors and all city council members in the county. At the time, 6% of sworn officers throughout the county were female.

Since then, we and other activists have put together task forces, called in the feds, gathered statistics, published articles, made repeated rounds of city councils, helped launch over a dozen lawsuits, organized protests, sat in endless meetings, broadcast the benefits, flown in police experts from across the country, joined with other organizations, held town hall meetings, enlisted community leaders,.... and look at the sorry results!

In two decades, we have less than a 3% gain in the percentage of females on our police forces, making more than a few things now patently obvious.

1. It's Intentional. The white male control of our police forces is neither accident nor a holdover vestige of times-gone-by. It's purposefully maintained by updated, concerted, and illegal efforts from the top ranks down, designed to keep women out, drive them out, and, and most emphatically, to keep them from gaining in rank. The discovery materials from the litany of sex discrimination lawsuits over the years have revealed these machinations beyond a doubt.

2. The public needs to scrutinize their police with as much intensity as they scrutinize their legislators, because undemocratic police forces can easily and invisibly void legislative intent. The unique, exclusive, and unchecked powers of police to decide which laws to enforce and which to ignore literally molds our entire social structures to the will and whims of police.

These police powers, combined with white male police biases, can and do unilaterally void legislative efforts aimed at protecting the well being of specific groups, such as police failures to enforce rape laws. They can and do hyper-enforce laws that selectively oppress other groups, such as the hyper-enforcement of crack cocaine laws, and with any given law, they can selectively target one group with enforcement while keeping hands off another, such as targeting



Rohnert Park Chief



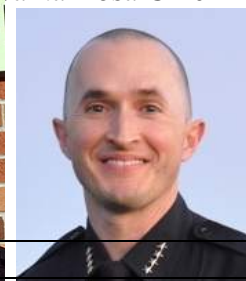
Santa Rosa Chief



Son. Cnty Sheriff



Sebastopol Chief



Healdsburg Chief



Petaluma Chief

Sonoma County's Autocracy ~ Occupy This! ~

females for prostitution offenses, while ignoring the pimps and johns.

These biases in the hands of the gatekeepers of protection and justice put a virtual lock on the continued violent subordination of women and minorities, irregardless of legislative efforts to generate remedies.

3. The policing problems the public does tend to focus on can't be solved without ending the exclusive male control of police powers. Police brutality, misconduct lawsuits, militarization of police, selective enforcement, higher than average rates of domestic and sexual violence... all these problems with police that communities are perennially and unsuccessfully struggling to get a handle on...all are fanned and fueled by the male control of policing at the top. The good news is that the obvious linchpin remedy of democratizing the ranks of policing hasn't yet been fully targeted. The enormous benefits only await the effort.

For More Ideas on What Can Be Done, See:

[Increasing Women Numbers and Influence in Policing;](#)
[Eleven Lessons Learned; Eleven Strategies Forward](#)



