

## **Regarding Police Use of Force Against Community Members**

The ACLU of Utah is an organization dedicated to restraining government intrusion into our lives, and ensuring that government wields its power responsibly. We strive for a state that affords dignity, autonomy and justice to all its residents.

There are very few ways in which the state so overtly wields power over us, than in the form of its law enforcement agents. In the words of our colleagues in Maryland, in the aftermath of the death of Freddie Gray, “Over time, the daily injustices, the repeated instances of police brutality, the unconstitutional treatment of poor and minority people – these patterns crush people’s souls.” To assume that such problems cannot and do not happen in our own state, would reveal a dangerous blindness to the reality faced by many of our fellow Utahns.

The ACLU of Utah pledges its commitment to finding a solution to the police militarization and law enforcement overreach that has come to characterize our nation in the following ways:

- 1. We proactively support community oversight of our law enforcement agencies.**

This includes empowering community members to exercise their right to record police officers who are interacting with the community, and also developing legislation related to police body-mounted cameras. We hope to ensure that when such technology is used, it is in a manner that protects the rights and privacy of both community members and public servants. We will insist that policies governing the use of “body cams” will ensure that video is collected in a way that is fair and unbiased. In addition, we will host events for community members and policy makers to discuss how community oversight of law enforcement can be better empowered through Civilian Review Boards in Utah.

- 2. We aggressively pursue transparency and accountability from our law**

**enforcement agencies statewide.** We have worked hard in recent years to pass state legislation that demands local agencies report on deployments of SWAT-style teams, as well as law enforcement use of drones. We will work with our allies to expand the categories of required reporting (when force is used against community members, when military-grade vehicles are deployed, etc).

3. **We believe that the state statutes defining “justified” use of police force should better serve the community.** We will work with our legislative allies to improve these statutes, while also demanding more comprehensive de-escalation training for law enforcement agents.
4. **As a founding member of Racially Just Utah, we support and provide information to community groups and individuals seeking to reform law enforcement practices in communities of color.**
5. **We take legal action against unconstitutional police policies and practices, such as the so-called “gang injunction” attempted by Ogden City** (and successfully challenged by the ACLU of Utah before the Utah Supreme Court).
6. **We offer “Know Your Rights When Encountering Law Enforcement” workshops to any interested community group.** If you gather the community members, we will provide the training.
7. **We offer “Legal Observer Trainings” and can provide legal observers to attend and witness community protests and demonstrations.** Our goal is to ensure that interactions between law enforcement and peaceful protestors remain respectful.

*If your grassroots group or community organization wants to learn more about any of these activities, or would like to schedule a training or presentation, please contact either [Anna Brower, Strategic Communications Manager](#), or [Reinard Knutsen, Office Manager](#), by email or by phone at (801) 521-9862.*