

Concerned Citizens for Justice

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March 2, 2021

Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

Concerned Citizens for Justice (CC4J) is a citizens group advocating for police reform in Chico, CA. A young homeless man experiencing a mental health crisis was recently shot down in a fatal officer-involved shooting here in Chico. This is the third such fatal shooting death in Chico since May 2017. We are writing today to urge you replace Xavier Becerra, the likely new cabinet member of President Biden's team, with a progressive-minded State Attorney General who is committed to police reform.

Butte County has had thirty-seven fatal officer-involved shootings during the tenure of the current District Attorney, Michael L. Ramsey, from 1987 to the present. DA Ramsey has ruled all the killings but one were justifiable. In the one case where Ramsey filed involuntary manslaughter against a police officer, he did so only after the release of dash camera recordings which revealed that the use of lethal force was unnecessary. The DA had initially justified the shooting and opined the officer fired accidentally or the firearm was defective. A Butte County jury saw the actions of the officer differently and convicted the shooter.

The two fatal officer-involved shootings of civilians in the City of Chico in 2017 are of particular concern to members of CC4J. The officers' actions in the two killings were found justifiable and not criminal acts by DA Ramsey, as with his findings in other fatal OIS. Both families who lost loved ones requested that the Attorney General conduct an independent investigation of these two killings. Attorney General Becerra's staff notified the families that an investigation would be done. The Attorney General's office eventually notified both families that there was nothing they could or would do to challenge the Butte County DA's determination. The Attorney General's staff provided scant facts to the families to confirm the scope of the investigations, and the staff's eventual decision to support the District Attorney.

Unless the State Attorney General is willing to thoroughly investigate civilian complaints of excessive use of lethal force by law enforcement from large and small counties, there is a troubling lack of checks and balances in our legal system. CC4J hopes you will appoint an Attorney General who is open to the movement for police reform, who will instruct his staff to thoroughly investigate complaints and share with the families of the victims the laws and policies that influenced the Attorney General's staff's ultimate decision.

Butte County needs a State Attorney General who will conduct fair and impartial investigations, because the record strongly indicates that we have a DA who is protecting law enforcement officers at the expense of impartiality.

Respectfully,

Emily Alma, Coordinator
Concerned Citizens for Justice
Chico, CA