

Event 2469: Mark Levin (Seattle Police Department)  
Transcript of testimony at a public hearing of the Seattle City Council's Public Safety & Health  
Committee  
August 20, 1974

**MARK LEVIN:**

Chairman Revelle, Council President Smith, Councilman Larkin invention. I think first we should address the problem before addressing the proposal. In 1973, the Seattle Police Department made 24,000 arrests, issued 109,000 traffic citations, handled 203,000 calls in which police cars were dispatched, plus thousands of other incidents citizen-police contact on the street. During this time, there are 85 police officers assaulted with weapons, 846 assaulted in other means. During the same period of time, there were 375 complaints filed against policemen. This represents about one in every 1000 police actions. This does not indicate a department that is routinely engaged in brutal or repressive tactics and certainly does not indicate a police problem. As far as citizen review boards or civilian review boards in general, we have attached a report titled "Advantages and Disadvantage of Civilian Review Boards and Alternates" as evidence of our remarks here that they are not uninformed. The bibliography appended there too is lengthy and we think complete. We also append a study by William H. Rogers, associate professor of law at the University of Washington dated July 1970. Our current disciplinary procedures are modeled very closely after the recommendations contained in this study. These procedures have been and are subject to continuous review and refinement. Since these procedures are incorporated by reference into the Police Guild Labor Agreement with the City, major changes are made with great care and only after significant negotiation with and concurrence by the Police Guild. Our review of all available literature and particularly the history of civilian review boards, where they have been implemented, convince us they have been largely unsuccessful and have little likelihood of success. Given all of the foregoing, we think it would be unwise to abandon a process that is working reasonably well and improving with time in favor of a process which has been largely discredited by its own history. We would recommend against the civilian review board in any form. Now addressing the STOP proposed ordinance, the proposal calls for an autonomous board, which is a violation of our City Charter and would require amendment. Section 3 entitled "Powers," and Subsection B "Enforcement Disciplinary Actions" is not only a violation of our City Charter, but our civil service rules and regulations. Section 4 "Composition and Qualification" disenfranchises over 50% of the residents of the City, and we questioned the constitutionality of such restrictions. There is no provisions made in this proposal for removal of any of the members of the board. Section 12, it is proposed that this board have access to any documents or records that deems pertinent a provision which goes well beyond existing law. Section 13 existing Internal Investigation Division files have been created under case law and guild agreement that such files would remain confidential. This provision for transfer of files would be in violation of all previous agreements entered into by the City with the employee group and is therefore of questionable legality. Now the police department, in closing does not totally lock out citizen participation and we have proposed and would be amenable to citizens review of our...of our review process, our disciplinary hearing review processes. This presently, though, is under negotiation between the guild and the City and I don't think that we can address it at this time. The study that that I've alluded to here from Dr. William Rogers is quite detailed and I think it gives you gives you a pretty good idea of how we feel about civilian review boards. Major Connery is here now to answer any parts that you may have or any questions you may have regarding this process in this reporting.