

From: [Paul Wermer](#)
To: [EngardioStaff \(BOS\)](#); [DorseyStaff \(BOS\)](#); [Stefani, Catherine \(BOS\)](#); [Carroll, John \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: SUPPORT: ITEM 4, Police Code - Drawing of Firearms by Armed Guards, File 230708 (Public Safety and Neighborhood Services)
Date: Sunday, September 10, 2023 6:09:26 PM

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Dear members of the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee,

I urge you to support the proposed amendment to the police code to remove the protection of property as sufficient reason to draw a firearm. (File No. 230708, Ordinance amending the Police Code to prohibit armed guards from drawing or exhibiting firearms, other than a holster, to protect property)

In 2003 I served on a San Francisco jury in a murder trial. This was a complex case, and the defense argued self defense. There was a lot of debate about what justified use of a weapon in self defense. Some members of the jury came from southern states; in one case the juror, as a high school student, had arrived home late one night - and his father had shot at (but missed) him. We were unanimous that the Texas tolerance for shooting people was not something San Francisco should ever tolerate. None of us would have accepted such a plea had the defense been of property, and (as in the case of Banko Brown) a case of shoplifting.

And yet, and yet, San Francisco code permits and protects exactly that careless killing in the defense of property. This is your chance to correct this dangerous language.

Please move this to the full Board with unanimous approval.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Wermer

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WOMEN'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE

**SFWPC Support for Ordinance #230708
amending the Police Code to prohibit armed guards from drawing or exhibiting
firearms, other than a holster, to protect property.**

July 25, 2023

San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall, Legislative Chamber, Room 250
San Francisco, CA 94102

**RE: Ordinance #230708 (Preston, Walton, Ronen, and Peskin) - Police Code -
Drawing of Firearms by Armed Guards**

Dear Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the San Francisco Women's Political Committee (SFWPC), we are writing in strong support of Ordinance #230708, amending the Police Code to prohibit armed guards from drawing or exhibiting firearms, other than a holster, to protect property.

We ask you to support Ordinance #230708, as it can prevent future deaths from happening and it can be a step for local government, the San Francisco Police Department, and security companies to collaborate with the community to search for *new strategies* that deter and address the root causes of crime that do not involve high risk of death. Material things are replaceable, human lives are not.

Sadly, our city has a documented history of bias complaints against security guards, that the Board of Supervisors already tried to address in 2022¹. Our Black and LGBTQ+ neighbors are disproportionately targeted. The death of Bank Brown was preventable, and we need to make sure to address this issue before we lose more San Franciscans. Prohibiting security guards from drawing firearms in the protection of property will ensure that we place the value of all lives above the property of businesses, especially multi-billion dollar ones.

1. San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco moves to increase oversight of private security guards after bias complaints, January 2022
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/San-Francisco-moves-to-increase-oversight-of-16804462.php>



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The United Nations Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials states that “*firearms should only be used by law enforcement in self-defense or against the imminent threat of death or serious injury.*”² Private security guards are not certified as law enforcement³, and should not be required by their employers to protect private property by putting themselves at high risk of injury or death to themselves, to the offender and to the public. The investigation of Banko Brown’s death revealed that the contracting company who employed the security guard had recently changed their policies to direct their employees to do “hands-on” recovery of the goods in stores: we can’t let private companies encourage violence and put in jeopardy the lives of the most vulnerable of us.

We urge you to pass Ordinance #230708, because our community needs healing in the wake of the death of Banko Brown. This Ordinance puts first our common value of protecting human life above private profits, while giving us the opportunity to re-think the meaning of public safety and find *new ways* to tackle crime and its roots in our community.

Sincerely,

SFWPC Board of Directors

2. Code of Conduct for law enforcement officials. (n.d.). OHCHR..

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/code-conduct-law-enforcement-officials>

3. Law enforcement: The Bureau of Justice Statistics describes law enforcement as the agencies and employees responsible for enforcing laws, maintaining public order, and managing public safety.