

August 26, 2014

Congresswoman Barbara Lee
1301 Clay Street, Suite 1000-N,
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Congresswoman Lee,

We are a coalition of groups writing to you about the upcoming Urban Shield military hardware trade show taking place at the Marriott Hotel on Broadway in Oakland the weekend of September 4. If that date and the Marriott ring a bell, it's because you happen to have a fundraising event scheduled there that same day. It is for this reason, as well as you being one of our local representatives, that we are contacting you.

We appreciate your good record on war and militarization issues, and hope you will share our desire to make the best use of this synchronicity to send a message to the organizers and hosts of this conference, and to raise the awareness of Oakland and the Bay Area over this blatant hawking of military hardware to law enforcement in your district.

In the wake of attacks on people in Ferguson, Missouri by police using military equipment similar to the types of armaments being sold and promoted at Urban Shield to perpetrate human rights violations --including gassing and arresting journalists present to document the suppression of the uprising fueled by the recent killing of Michael Brown -- the issue of police departments in America being armed with military weapons is critical now more than ever. The militarization of police and the abuses that have accompanied this "warrior cop" mentality in the United States are becoming an international human rights issue. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has spoken out about it, calling on U.S. authorities to ensure that the rights to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are protected, and Amnesty International has dispatched a special delegation of observers to Ferguson, the first time the organization has ever deployed such a team to the United States.

At this critical juncture, we on the local level must strongly condemn and speak out against the Urban Shield conference being held in our own back yard, and the nationwide militarization of law enforcement that events like this represent. Management at the Marriott Hotel need to hear the message that hosting Urban Shield will incur political and economic costs for their business.

We need to know that you as our congressional representative stand with us, with members of our communities, and with the people of Ferguson and victims of police abuse and violence across the country. None of us want your fundraising event at the Marriott on the day of this conference to be seen as a tacit endorsement or looking the other way. Here are some specific suggestions for how your office could help:

- ◆ Cancel your event at the Marriott and put out a press release letting people know the reason why you are choosing to relocate to a different venue
- ◆ Send the managers of the Marriott a letter from your office asking them not to host the Urban Shield conference next year and letting them know that continuing to work with the conference will incur economic and political costs to their business
- ◆ Join us in person in demonstrating at the Marriott from 4-6 p.m. on September 5, where we could allow you time to speak at your convenience, and/or invite representatives of the Bay Area Civil Liberties Coalition to appear at your fundraising event and address attendees on this topic
- ◆ Ask the Oakland City Council not to approve any City funding for Urban Shield in 2015, and not to approve renewal of the contract between Urban Shield and the Convention Center for 2015 and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors not to approve any federal grants intended to support Urban Shield in 2015

We look forward to hearing from you on how you are prepared to use your influence and visibility as a member of Congress to join us in letting the organizers and hosts of this conference promoting the militarization of law enforcement know that Urban Shield is not welcome in Oakland or the Bay Area.

Sincerely,

Starchild, On behalf of hundreds of members of the following organizations making up the Bay Areas Civil Liberties Coalition: Bill Of Rights Defense Committee, Code Pink, Libertarian Party of San Francisco, Media Alliance, Oakland Privacy Working Group, Restore the Fourth, San Francisco 99% Coalition, World Can't Wait

P.S. - For more information on our local efforts, please see the websites BayAreaCivilLiberties.org and FacingTearGas.org.