Bias-Based Policing

401.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE
This policy provides guidance to office members that affirms the Sonoma County Sheriff's Office's commitment to policing that is fair and objective.

Nothing in this policy prohibits the use of specified characteristics in law enforcement activities designed to strengthen the office's relationship with its diverse communities (e.g., cultural and ethnicity awareness training, youth programs, community group outreach, partnerships).

401.1.1 DEFINITIONS
Definitions related to this policy include:

**Bias-based policing** - An inappropriate reliance on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, disability or affiliation with any non-criminal group (protected characteristics) as the basis for providing differing law enforcement service or enforcement (Penal Code § 13519.4).

401.2 POLICY
The Sonoma County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing law enforcement services to the community with due regard for the racial, cultural or other differences of those served. It is the policy of this office to provide law enforcement services and to enforce the law equally, fairly, objectively and without discrimination toward any individual or group.

401.3 BIAS-BASED POLICING PROHIBITED
Bias-based policing is strictly prohibited.

However, nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit a deputy from considering protected characteristics in combination with credible, timely and distinct information connecting a person or people of a specific characteristic to a specific unlawful incident, or to specific unlawful incidents, specific criminal patterns or specific schemes.

401.3.1 CALIFORNIA RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT
Members shall not collect information from a person based on religious belief, practice, affiliation, national origin or ethnicity unless permitted under state or federal law (Government Code § 8310.3).

Members shall not assist federal government authorities (Government Code § 8310.3):

(a) In compiling personal information about a person's religious belief, practice, affiliation, national origin or ethnicity.

(b) By investigating, enforcing or assisting with the investigation or enforcement of any requirement that a person register with the federal government based on religious belief, practice, or affiliation, or national origin or ethnicity.
401.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES
Every member of this office shall perform his/her duties in a fair and objective manner and is responsible for promptly reporting any suspected or known instances of bias-based policing to a supervisor. Members should, when reasonable to do so, intervene to prevent any biased-based actions by another member.

401.4.1 REASON FOR CONTACT
Deputies contacting a person shall be prepared to articulate sufficient reason for the contact, independent of the protected characteristics of the individual.

To the extent that written documentation would otherwise be completed (e.g., arrest report, field interview (FI) card), the involved deputy should include those facts giving rise to the contact, as applicable.

Except for required data-collection forms or methods, nothing in this policy shall require any deputy to document a contact that would not otherwise require reporting.

401.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES
Supervisors should monitor those individuals under their command for compliance with this policy and shall handle any alleged or observed violations in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

(a) Supervisors should discuss any issues with the involved deputy and his/her supervisor in a timely manner.
   
   1. Supervisors should document these discussions, in the prescribed manner.

(b) Supervisors should periodically review BWC recordings, (MDC) data and any other available resource used to document contact between deputies and the public to ensure compliance with the policy.
   
   1. Recordings or data that capture a potential instance of bias-based policing should be appropriately retained for administrative investigation purposes.

(c) Supervisors shall initiate investigations of any actual or alleged violations of this policy.

(d) Supervisors should take prompt and reasonable steps to address any retaliatory action taken against any member of this office who discloses information concerning bias-based policing.

401.6 REPORTING TO CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
The Professional Standards Bureau shall ensure that all data required by the California Department of Justice (DOJ) regarding complaints of racial bias against deputies is collected and provided to the CIB Manager for required reporting to the DOJ (Penal Code § 13012; Penal Code § 13020). See the CIB Policy.
401.7 TRAINING
Training on fair and objective policing and review of this policy should be conducted as directed by the Professional Standards Bureau.

(a) All sworn members of this office will be scheduled to attend Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-approved training on the subject of bias-based policing.

(b) Pending participation in such POST-approved training and at all times, all members of this office are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and consider racial and cultural differences among members of this community.

(c) Each sworn member of this office who received initial bias-based policing training will thereafter be required to complete an approved refresher course every five years, or sooner if deemed necessary, in order to keep current with changing racial, identity and cultural trends (Penal Code § 13519.4(i)).