



5125 MacArthur Blvd, NW
Third Floor
Washington, DC 20016
(202) 537-5070
www.calmresponse.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New National Organization Formed to Address Police Misconduct

A new, national nonprofit organization, Communities Against Law Enforcement Misconduct (CALM) is launching at a press conference Tuesday, May 12, 2015 at 1:00 pm in the National Press Club's Lisagor Room. Speakers will include:

- Jody Westby, CALM founder and president of the board of directors
- Stephen Saltzburg, Wallace and Beverley Woodbury University Professor of Law at George Washington Law School and past chair of the American Bar Association's Criminal Justice Section
- Patrice Sultan, Chair Legislation Committee for the DC Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
- Monica Hopkins-Maxwell, Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of the Nation's Capital
- Richard J. Rosendall, president of the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance of Washington, DC
- Kathleen Murray, founder and owner of Zoolatry, a well-established pet sitting/walking service in Washington, DC, and animal rights advocate

CALM was founded by Jody Westby, who was spurred into action by the outpouring of responses she received after a video went viral of her intervening with DC police who had detained an elderly African American man who worked in her neighborhood.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2787400/Just-s-black-doesn-t-mean-robbed-house-The-moment-attorney-stopped-police-arresting-elderly-disabled-black-man-suspicion-robbing-house-mile-away.html>

CALM's primary goal is to promote calm responses in police interactions with civilians and stop law enforcement misconduct consisting of racial profiling, police brutality, and excessive or lethal force toward people and animals, particularly dogs. CALM promotes police protection and civility between law enforcement and communities. "We are *not* against law enforcement," Westby noted "we are just against certain conduct by law enforcement."

Police civility and trust between law enforcement and their communities are national values that have been lost. Today, police forces are equipped with weapons and high-technology tools and trained in accordance with zero tolerance policies that have resulted in lethal force for minor offenses. Law enforcement misconduct has become a national crisis that impacts a broad range of people across America: African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Caucasians, the LGTB community, and others, notes Westby.

"This is a national problem that has requires a national effort. CALM can change

this,” notes Todis McDonald, a volunteer who is helping launch the organization. “Too many children today fear police instead of trust them for protection. Too many mothers sit in fear that their children’s lives will be ruined or ended through an unfortunate encounter with the police. Too many lives have been needlessly lost or damaged out of law enforcement’s failure to respond in a calm manner.” Law enforcement misconduct is a national issue that goes to the heart of what this country stands for: equality and justice.

CALM has four key activities that advance its overall goal to re-establish a calm response as the norm to situations involving police and civilians.

- Serve as a data repository of information on (a) instances of police misconduct involving racial profiling, excessive force toward people and animals, or lethal force, and (b) programs that work well to foster good relations between law enforcement and communities and instances of exemplary behavior.
- Work with police departments to change policies and training regarding response tactics and use of lethal force.
- Develop reform proposals for civil and criminal penalties for law enforcement that engage in misconduct.
- Develop wallet cards and materials that raise awareness and provide simple guidance on civil rights and what to do – and not do – in an encounter with the police and other materials that will promote change.

CALM will build a pool of grassroots supporters across the nation. “Any individual can join CALM and we will light up their community on the U.S. map,” said Westby. “We want to build a pool of grassroots supporters in every community to help interact with their local police departments and develop local support for reforms,” she added.

Communities no longer trust law enforcement and are fearful of interaction and confrontation. This dynamic does not advance public safety; it makes it more difficult. The best eyes and ears on the ground are the people. Information sharing is critical to solving crimes, and civilians are less likely to report useful tips and information that advance community protection when they are fearful or distrustful of the police. “What happened to having a conversation and listening to people who may be able to provide information?” asked McDonald.

CALM will work to develop relationships with police departments to promote policies and training that advance civility, respect, and public safety.

CONTACT:

Jody R. Westby, founder and President of CALM board of directors
202 337-0097 – land
202 255-2700 – cell
jody.westby@calmresponse.org