

## Police tactics draw a crowd with opinions | Talks on use of deadly force marked by heated exchanges

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### Document Text

A polarized crowd of more than 300 packed a Southeast San Diego auditorium last night to boo and cheer an inconclusive panel discussion on police shootings.

The discussion was produced by KNSD-TV as an installment of its "Third Thursday" program on current events.

The public demand for tickets to the program was unprecedented in the show's two-year history, host Marty Levin told the audience at the San Diego Community College District's Educational Cultural Complex.

"I never thought in my life that I'd see standing room only for what is basically a public-affairs program," Levin said.

The discussion apparently drew such intense attention because of the spate of police shootings in San Diego County this year. Thus far, the county's police officers have killed nine people and wounded 13.

During the 90-minute discussion, the six panelists mostly sounded themes heard throughout San Diego this year.

Some panel members complained that police are too quick to use handguns in tense confrontations. On the other hand, representatives of law-enforcement agencies stressed that police officers are confronted with a host of difficult situations and split-second decisions.

Judging from the crowd's response, it was almost equally divided between critics of police on one side and off-duty police and their supporters on the other.

The most heated exchange between panelists came after Michael Crowley, a representative of the American Civil Liberties Union, suggested that District Attorney Ed Miller's office is lax in its reviews of police shootings.

After another panelist said only one police officer has been prosecuted in connection with a shooting in recent years, Crowley suggested that the district attorney try to clarify standards in police shootings by prosecuting more police officers.

"They reach out in lots of areas, and they could do so in this one," Crowley said of prosecutors.

The remark enraged panelist Brian Michaels, the chief deputy district attorney.

"He doesn't want police officers to have the same rights that any other citizen does," Michaels said, drawing a storm of applause from police advocates in the audience.

Credit: Tribune Staff Writer

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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