

San Francisco police victim demographics legislation. Government gone awry.

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The absurdity coming out of San Francisco this week is quite mind numbing in my humble opinion. What's set to occur there, as a result of a recently passed ordinance, is something I just can't seem to make any sense of whatsoever. Those affected by the housing crisis, residency-prohibiting high cost of living and general municipal dilapidation...well, here you go.

The [San Francisco Chronicle reported](#) the city just passed a new ordinance requiring the police department to report crime victim demographics that "*supporters say will equip officials with crucial data to help identify crime trends, guide prevention strategies and better direct public safety resources.*" Good thing, so far.

The article states,

"The report would include aggregated information on the race or ethnicity, gender identity and age of victims of serious crimes, including assault or sexual assault, burglary, elder or child abuse, theft and murder. Police would also have to report the disability, nationality, religion and sexual orientation of hate crime victims."

Police records management systems (RMS) collate this information from the reports filled out by officers. They collect this data as a matter of standard operating procedure. Report writing 101.

"Police already collect this demographic data", the article acknowledges, "but the ordinance would mandate that they report it quarterly to the mayor, supervisors and other officials."

So, the data already exists. Now it's a matter of sending it over to city hall. Simple. As a bit of a data wonk myself who did this exact kind of work for the police department at one time, I know that a query, aggregation and submission of this kind of report could be completed in (depending on how much data is involved) anywhere from 30 minutes to a couple of hours, tops.

Recall that the data exists; the database exists; the technology exists, today, in this police department.

What's the problem?

"The city's budget and legislative analyst estimated that amending the reporting system would result in a one-time cost of"....wait for it.... "at least \$960,000". \$40k shy of \$1M.

\$960K. Now I don't know if there are politics at play here, if this is a typo, or just someone seriously misinformed. That is the cost of an entire system replacement. It's enough money to replace a medium-sized police department's entire records management system, with hundreds of users. It is the cost of...many things, not this.

What could San Francisco do with \$1M?

Save it.