

Officers: Discrimination claims not accurate portrayal of police

by [Michael Ferraresi](#) - Apr. 23, 2009 12:00 AM
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A group of 20 supervisors, retired officers and civilian staff spoke out Wednesday in response to racial-discrimination allegations which they said unfairly painted Phoenix police as racist.

The officers said they wished to respond to an ongoing investigation triggered by the [Phoenix Law Enforcement Association](#), which filed complaints on behalf of several officers who claimed their reports of discrimination were inadequately addressed by police management.

Union representatives wrote a letter to [Phoenix City Manager](#) Frank Fairbanks this spring to report a series of racially charged incidents, including claims that supervisors used racial slurs in the workplace.

The union followed up on April 15 with a complaint about a Black officer who was given a written reprimand for his role in an incident in which three White officers received a "coaching," rather than discipline, for interacting with a group of intoxicated women at a bar during a meal break.

Lt. Robert Jones, a supervisor in the Phoenix Central City Precinct, said he called friends and minority colleagues for a press conference at City Hall to highlight the department's diversity.

Terry Yahweh, president of the Arizona Black [Law Enforcement](#) Employees union, was not present at the press conference and could not be reached for comment. The group included former members of the union.

PLEA representatives filed complaints this spring with city officials who forwarded the list of as many as seven misconduct allegations to the city's Equal Opportunity Office, in addition to the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Civil Rights Division of the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

PLEA President [Mark Spencer](#) commended the minority officers for speaking out about their positive experiences and highlighting diversity, though he warned that the group's statements did not address his union's concerns about management.