

# THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING

## **Minutes from the Teleconference on Building Trust and Legitimacy**

**January 21, 2015**

**5:00 p.m. EST**

### **Attendance**

*Task Force Members:* Charles Ramsey, Laurie Robinson, Cedric L. Alexander, Jose Lopez, Tracey L. Meares, Susan Lee Rahr, Constance Rice, Sean Michael Smoot, Bryan Stevenson, Roberto Villaseñor

*Staff and Agency Personnel:* Ronald Davis, Melanca Clark, James Copple, Jessica Drake, Deborah Spence

**At 5:00 p.m. EST, the operator welcomed everyone to the teleconference meeting.**

Ronald Davis welcomed everyone to the call and turned to Melanca Clark to conduct roll call. All task force members were present except for Brittney Packnett. A quorum was present, so the meeting continued with an introduction of the co-chairs, Laurie Robinson and Charles Ramsey.

Laurie Robinson welcomed the public listeners to the call and briefly summarized the charge of the task force per the Executive Order, noting that the initial report to the President is due March 2, 2015. She also explained that the process for developing recommendations for that report is heavily dependent on public and stakeholder engagement.

Charles Ramsey covered topics for six listening sessions, referencing that the first one was held last week on Trust and Legitimacy. He then turned it over to James Copple of the task force support staff to describe the tools being provided to the task force members to aid in deliberative process.

James Copple described the three basic tools: the summary, the index/digest, and access to all the testimony and public comments. All of these are being made available on the task force website so the public can see what the members see. The current digest includes testimony and comment submitted through January 13, 2015; anything submitted after that date will be captured in the next digest. It is alphabetical by submitter within category of submission (oral, written, email, tweet).

Laurie Robinson called on each task force member for any clarifying questions or comments:

- Cedric Alexander had no questions, but noted it is a lot of information to digest.
- Jose Lopez noted his concern with how some of the recommendations might be implementable if they were moved forward.

## THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING

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- Tracey Mears asked how staff dealt with recommendations that weren't necessarily connected to the pillar. James Cople explained that they appear in all materials except the summary document, which focuses on the specific theme of building trust and legitimacy.
- Sue Rahr complimented the task force staff on how easy everything was to follow.
- Connie Rice had no questions or comments at this time.
- Sean Smoot also complimented the staff on materials and had one request: under the training section, there was a specific anthropology course at John Jay College that was referred to by oral witnesses. Can staff track down that course name and try to obtain a description or syllabus? James Cople confirmed that the name was captured in the video and both the name and course descriptions could be obtained.
- Bryan Stevenson wanted to know what protocols the COPS Office (and USDOJ generally) currently use to incentivize best practices by police departments. Is funding tied to specific programs and practices, particularly around activities such as review boards and training in implicit bias. Melanca Clark confirmed that the COPS Office could provide that.
- Roberto Villaseñor noted it was a large amount of information and noted that it included a lot of varying viewpoints. He wanted to make sure the task force would be conscious of making sure there was factual information behind their recommendations, and not simply emotion. Ronald Davis responded to remind everyone that the staff would help them link recommendations to evidence, and that the Comprehensive Law Enforcement Review project work the COPS Office has been doing will be key to that. Laurie Robinson concurred, noting that the COPS Office has been documenting research and practice for twenty years. Roberto Villaseñor thanked Ronald Davis and Laurie Robinson, and concluded that all points are valid; it's just important to base recommendations on research as well as perceptions.

Melanca Clark introduced the public comment period, noting that people who wished to comment would have two minutes per person. The operator managed the caller lines:

- Jill Corson Lake also submitted comments about community dialog and officer training. She wished to recommend Reos Partners, a global organization that worked with creating community dialogue around the end of apartheid in South Africa. She also recommended consultation with the Public Conversations Project in Massachusetts. She believes both organizations could help bring communities and officers together.
- Sophia, a professor at Bowie State, commented that the problem with the public has to do with the public's perceived lack of concern on the part of local leaders when deadly force is used against an unarmed person. When deadly force is used, the process should be

# THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING

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overseen by the USDOJ to make sure the process is being handled appropriately. Local leaders may not be independent enough.

- Roger Mitchell, the Chief Medical Examiner for Washington, D.C., noted that this is important to the medical examiner community as well. They are the ones who provide insight into causes of death in custody. He noted the need for a clearer definition of a death in custody as well as for collecting the proper data in comprehensive way. A death certificate is probably the most objective data available on death. A recommendation could be to add a box on the U.S. standard death certificate form that notes when the death took place in custody. This could provide a strong QA/QC measure as well as provide consistent data for epidemiological research.
- Julie Hudash of Team Kids in California also submitted written materials relating to youth, schools, and police aimed at building trust through mentorship. She noted that the program has led to law enforcement participating in a deliberate way to work with children and has shown incredible results. She was also excited by the program's growth, as they have just completed a pilot program in Arlington, Virginia. She also noted that for better trust, we need to invest in innovative programs that bring young people and officers together to get to know each other. Kids need to know they are on the same team as police officers.
  - Jose Lopez asked if the members could get a copy of any of this program's evaluation reports. James Copple confirmed that the staff would obtain relevant research for them.
- Jim Mikel, Chairman of the Spirit Foundation, described his work with the U.S. Department of Energy on the Home Energy Score Program. His idea is to engage law enforcement in their program as they conduct residence reviews on energy efficiency; it could also be a way for the community to meet and engage with officers in home safety checks.

There were no further public comments. Per Ronald Davis, James Copple instructed everyone that all materials are being provided on the task force website at [www.cops.usdoj.gov/policingtaskforce](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/policingtaskforce). Melanca Clark noted the upcoming listening session locations and schedules with information also available on the same website.

The co-chairs thanked everyone for joining the call and encouraged people to continue providing thoughtful input and comments as they did on this call. They reminded listeners that they can come in person to listening sessions or submit written comment. Further instructions are available on the task force website.

**The conference call was adjourned at approximately 5:48 p.m. EST.**

Minutes Certified By:

  
Laurie Robinson, Co-Chair

2/23/15  
Date

  
Charles Ramsey, Co-Chair

2/23/15  
Date