

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

## **Minutes from the Listening Session on Policy and Oversight**

**University of Cincinnati  
Tangeman University Center Great Hall  
2766 UC Main St.  
Cincinnati, OH 45221  
January 30, 2015  
10:00 a.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, Darrel Stephens, Steven Rickman, Melanca Clark, Katherine McQuay, Charlotte Grzebien, Deborah Spence, Laurel Matthews, Silas Darden, Michael Franko, Jennifer Rosenberger, Shannon Long, James Copple, Colleen Copple, Jessica Drake, Jason Drake, Latitia Harmon, Steven Minson

*Invited Witnesses:* Jeff Blackwell, Geoffrey Alpert, Mick McHale, Harold Medlock, Rashad Robinson, Christina Brown, Garry McCarthy, Rodney Monroe, Sean Whent, Sim Gill, Jay McDonald, Kirk Primas, Chuck Wexler, Malik Aziz, Hayley Gorenberg, Kathy Harrell, Barbara O'Connor, Charlie Beck, Brian Buchner, Darius Charney

### **Welcome and Opening Statements**

Ronald Davis, Executive Director of the task force and Director of the COPS Office, opened the listening session of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing at 10:00 a.m. He then invited Cincinnati Police Chief Jeff Blackwell to make welcoming remarks.

Chief Blackwell thanked everyone for coming today and acknowledged the honor in having this group choose this city. He noted that these are critically important discussions and that the history of Cincinnati bodes well for the upcoming dialogue.

The co-chairs, Laurie Robinson and Charles Ramsey, each made welcoming statements noting the importance of this work and the timeline of producing recommendations to the President by March 2. They noted that after two days here in Cincinnati, the task force would have further hearings in Phoenix, Arizona, and Washington, DC.

They were followed by opening statements by each of the task force members in reverse alphabetical order. Each introduced themselves for the audience.

Director Davis presented an overview of the agenda and thanked the staff who had organized the meeting before handing over to the co-chairs to introduce the first panel.

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## **Panel One—Use of Force Research and Policies**

Each panelist gave a five-minute presentation and answered questions from task force members.

Geoffrey Alpert talked about his research experience and noted the need for national statistics on police use of force. He is hopeful that the Transparency Act signed in December will provide us better information on the use of force.

Michael “Mick” McHale urged the task force to consider rank-and-file police officers. They have a stake in the outcome both as officers who carry out the law and as citizens impacted by the view of public safety.

Harold Medlock called for use of force training and policy to be developed that helps communities understand how and why there is use of force. He noted that communities must treat use of force policies as a living document.

Rashad Robinson spoke to how many people in the nation distrust law enforcement as well as the ability of the field to investigate and prosecute officers that do wrong. He acknowledged the need to restore this trust, noting that he often hears from black and brown people who feel a real threat that they will be assaulted or killed by law enforcement.

## **Panel Two—Use of Force Investigations and Oversight**

Each panelist gave a five-minute presentation and answered questions from task force members.

Chuck Wexler talked about how there is a larger issue that is getting traction with progressive chiefs and sheriffs: some use of force incidents can be prevented, and how can we prevent them? He then enumerated nine things the Police Executive Research Forum has learned from working with agencies over many years.

Sim Gill said that the question of legitimacy is at the heart of the conversation. When we don't hold officers accountable, good officers suffer. If we want to assist our best officers, we must keep officers accountable for their misuse of force.

Jay McDonald stated that we need to define the legitimate uses of force that are at an officer's disposal, and advised that the most critical characteristic of officers is their judgment.

Kirk Primas spoke to the experience the Las Vegas (Nevada) Metro Police Department has had with the Collaborate Reform Model to revise their use of force policy and training.

*The task force adjourned for a lunch break and was called back to order at 1:45 p.m. EST by Ronald Davis.*

## **Panel Three—Civilian Oversight**

Each panelist gave a five-minute presentation and answered questions from task force members.

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Charlie Beck spoke about how civilian oversight is now the cornerstone of the Los Angeles Police Department management, although it wasn't always like that. Until it was aided by a consent decree, which gave a mandate that could not be ignored, it was not able to make significant change.

Brian Buchner talked about how civilian oversight is not sufficient to change policing, but without it, it is impossible to gain public accountability and trust. He also spoke to the realities of local variation in oversight programs.

Darias Charney's remarks included a recommendation for a research study of jurisdictions that have civilian governing boards and compare them to jurisdictions run in more traditional ways with a commissioner. This should determine if there is a difference in the quality of community relations, and which aspects of civilian governance models are most likely to bring about success.

### **Panel Four—Mass Demonstrations**

Each panelist gave a five-minute presentation and answered questions from task force members.

Christina Brown called for the elimination of the usage of military grade equipment during mass demonstrations. She noted that it can trigger historical trauma and lead to disparate impact on communities of color.

Garry McCarthy spoke about the experience in Chicago beginning with the NATO summit in 2012 and the goal being to protect the right to free speech while preventing criminal behavior.

Rodney Monroe talked about what the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Police Department learned from their experiences around the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

Sean Whent discussed the Bay Area's rich tradition of protest activity and exercise of first amendment rights. He spoke to how the Oakland (California) Police Department utilizes an incident command system and seeks to learn from every experience.

### **Panel Five—Law Enforcement Culture and Diversity**

Each panelist gave a five-minute presentation and answered questions from task force members.

Malik Aziz talked about failures to diversify police forces and the need for agencies to reflect the agencies they served.

Haley Gorenberg talked about experiences of the LGBT community and the need to build culturally competent police workforces and to mandate culturally competent training.

Kathy Harrell spoke about how a federal collaborative agreement has changed the culture of policing in Cincinnati, leading to the FOP and community working together and advocating for each other long term.

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Barbara O'Connor spoke about the cultural barriers to recruiting more women into policing, but also noted that this is not a gender issue, but rather a diversity issue. We have an opportunity to create law enforcement organizations that are about equality.

**Audience Participation**

During the open comment period, James Copple read a few of the emails and tweets that had been submitted by online viewers. They were unattributed. In addition, Executive Director Ronald Davis provided time for people in the audience to speak. Each speaker had two minutes, and comments were made by Iris Rowley, Danny Brown, Eric Ellis, Lacey Jane Brewster, Herschel Daniels, and Maria DeliSanti.

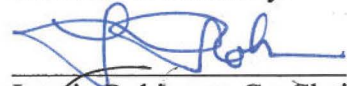
**Concluding Remarks**

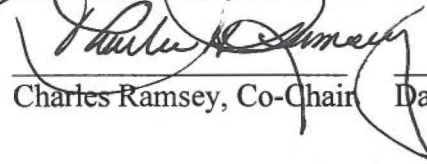
At the end of the audience comment period, each of the task force members took a few minutes to thank all the presenters and summarize what they were taking away from the day. They spoke in reverse alphabetical order, concluding with the co-chairs.

Executive Director Ronald Davis then thanked everyone for attending and noted that testimony would resume on technology and social media at 9:00 a.m. on January 31 here in the Tangeman Center.

**The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:00 p.m. EST.**

Minutes Certified By:

 2/23/15  
Laurie Robinson, Co-Chair      Date

 2/23/15  
Charles Ramsey, Co-Chair      Date