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**AT THE PLANNING MEETING FOR THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON
POLICING IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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Comprehensive Law Enforcement Review Project

Overview

Neither a chronology nor a forecast, the Comprehensive Law Enforcement Review is a foundational document *that summarizes what is understood about the current state of law enforcement from research, empirical evidence, and practice* in eight thematic areas: police legitimacy and public trust, crime reduction strategies, efforts to fight terrorism, alternatives to incarceration, officer wellness and safety, technology, federal initiatives and policy reform, and the future of policing.

Background and Methodology

In recent years, many of the organizations that represent the voice of law enforcement in the United States have called for another Presidential Commission. To make their case they pointed to the effectiveness of the 1965 Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice in advancing the field. They also called attention to the fundamental ways in which expectations of law enforcement have changed in the last fifty years, particularly in our post 9/11, high-tech, global economy.

The Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice

- On July 23, 1965, recognizing the urgency of the nation's crime problem and the depth of ignorance about it, President Johnson established a Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice through Executive Order 11236. Two years later, the commission released its final report, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*.
- It was the work of 19 commissioners, 63 staff members, 175 consultants, and hundreds of advisors, who called three national conferences, conducted five national surveys, held hundreds of meetings, and interviewed tens of thousands of persons.
- It produced two hundred concrete recommendations covering just about every aspect of the criminal justice system that the commissioners believed would lead to a safer and more just American society.

Nine law enforcement organizations (International Association of Chiefs of Police, Major Cities' Chiefs Association, Major County Sheriffs' Association, National Sheriffs' Association, Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Police Executive Research Forum, National Association of Police Organizations, and Fraternal Order of Police) presented Attorney General Eric H. Holder with a white paper in 2014, stating the need for a new national commission.

Based on this white paper and discussions with the organizations, the Attorney General instructed the Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) to undertake a comprehensive law enforcement review.

- Department of Justice staff and executive directors and officers of nine leading law enforcement associations agreed to a plan for implementing this review process, which included examination of eight major themes and critical sub-topics through a collaborative team approach for the law enforcement review.
- The COPS Office assigned a project manager to coordinate and facilitate eight separate subject matter teams. Each team consisted of the following: a COPS Office senior analyst to oversee discussions and help reach consensus agreements, a research assistant, a subject matter expert/academic advisor, staff from the National Institute of Justice and Bureau of Justice Assistance, and practitioner advisors nominated by the nine law enforcement associations.
- The teams met multiple times by conference call to discuss the topic areas, identify key materials, develop findings and conclusions, review drafts, and finalize their chapters. The research assistants, assisted by the subject matter experts/academic advisors, conducted extensive literature reviews of evidence-based research and practice-based case studies, and presented the content for validation by the practitioner members.

Summary of Findings and Themes

This report is organized in a progressive order of topics and concepts.

- Chapter one addresses police legitimacy and public trust. In a democratic society, public trust and confidence is central to the legitimacy of a police force. The fear of oppression and discriminatory law enforcement can be as debilitating to a community as the fear of crime, so without legitimacy and trust there is no platform for the remaining discussions.
- Chapter two looks at crime reduction strategies. Law enforcement agencies are expected to respond to, and prevent, a diversity of violent and non-violent crimes and behaviors. Proven strategies are critical to the ability to do that effectively and efficiently.
- Chapter three discusses how 9/11 was a seminal event in the American Policing narrative, and how it created a new and dynamic responsibility not only for the public, but for agencies and officers at all levels of government.

- Chapter four examines alternatives to incarceration and strategies for re-entry. Long-term imprisonment on a massive scale is cost-prohibitive, and most incarcerated individuals will eventually be released. As a result, law enforcement has a role to play both in managing the flow of people to prisons and jails, and in helping those released effectively integrate back into communities.
- Chapter five looks at officer wellness and safety. The law enforcement field must take care of its own in order to take care of their communities.
- Chapter six addresses technology. In a rapidly changing technological landscape, police must not only be able to identify and adopt new technology, but also do so in ways that improve their effectiveness without infringing on individual rights.
- Chapter seven discusses federal initiatives and policy reform. While policing is an inherently local activity, there are policies at the federal level that impact how even small municipalities practice.
- Chapter eight looks at the future of policing. How can we build the police agency of the future? How can the law enforcement field prepare itself now for effectively recruiting, hiring, training, and leading the next generation? These are critical questions which must be answered to ensure that law enforcement agencies are effective at what they do and legitimate in the eyes of the people they serve.

Across the eight issue areas, five key themes emerged

1. Effective Law Enforcement is Dependent on Public Trust

The theme of police legitimacy and public trust is universal to the entire Review.

- In efforts to reduce and prevent crime, there are strategies and techniques that may prove effective in the short run, but at great long term cost to public support and agency legitimacy.
- The use of new technologies and even some of the tactics now at law enforcement's disposal can pose serious threats to individual rights to privacy and free expression if rules for governance and use are not carefully explored in transparent ways.
- The way we police terrorism can have profound implications for civil liberties. The focus of these activities cannot simply be on preventing a future attack, but must also include their effect on public trust in law enforcement.
- Efforts to keep officers safe on the job must also consider legitimacy issues. Protective gear and situational protocols that are designed only with officer safety in mind can result in public perception that officers do not trust and respect them.

2. Effective Law Enforcement Requires Collaboration

Law enforcement officers are perhaps the most visible ambassadors of local government.

- This visibility means that police officers are called upon to address an amazing array of crime and social disorder problems, with many of the underlying causes and solutions ultimately beyond their control. But this truth has never tempered public expectations.
- The problem-solving approach that emphasizes addressing community concerns through collaborations with both other public services and the private sector is simply a better way of doing business.

3. Effective Law Enforcement is Nationally Coherent

It is easy to refer to American law enforcement as a singular entity, but in fact we see great variation in the delivery of law enforcement services across the country.

- Some variation is statutory and some a function of geography. But what is consistent is the public expectation of what law enforcement can do and how officers should behave.
- Neighboring jurisdictions may have incompatible communications systems or duplicate investments in infrequently used resources which, theoretically, could be shared, but seldom are.
- Innovations in addressing specific types of crime spreads unevenly through informal networks rather than through systematic replication of empirical evidence.
- More work is needed to mitigate the challenges inherent in having more than 17,000 law enforcement agencies at work within the nation's borders.

4. Effective Law Enforcement Starts with Effective Leadership

For agencies to succeed at the multi-dimensional demands placed on them by the public, they need to cultivate leadership excellence.

- Like military organizations where managers always come from within the ranks, policing is dependent upon itself to develop its leaders.
- Challenges of exercising local police leadership in a globally connected society merit special attention at this point in the profession's evolution.
- Leaders need to master a growing body of knowledge, including technology procurement, evidence-based decision making, multi-dimensional performance management, and diverse platform communications to be successful in managing effective and efficient organizations.

5. Effective Law Enforcement is Challenging

Sometimes we can be so focused on any one part of a system that we fail to see the interconnectedness of all the parts, or understand how complicated the system actually is. To

have any discussion on the state of law enforcement and where it might go in the future, we should keep in mind the sheer complexity and challenging nature of the job.

- The nature of police work is that it is dangerous. Officers are constantly called upon to put themselves into situations others are running from.
- In addition to their obvious crime and public safety responsibilities we also ask to police to deal with everything from traffic control, to persons with mental illness, to homeless individuals, public intoxication, and issues associated with an aging population.
- There must be individuals in the organization who can manage the acquisition and management of technology, respond to populations with unique needs, evaluate strategies and tactics from multiple perspectives, manage communications through multiple platforms, and conduct complex analyses.
- A police agency is also a customer service agency that responds to the short and long-term needs of diverse communities which may have different or conflicting agendas.

What to Expect in the Briefing Books

At present the approximately 200-page report is in editing, and will then be reviewed by the leadership of the stakeholder groups prior to finalization and public distribution. In order to help you make use of the research captured in the Comprehensive Law Enforcement Review, four to five page executive summaries of the key research findings (and practice examples) detailed in the full report that are germane to the listening session will be provided as part of your briefing books.