

THE PRESIDENT'S TASK FORCE ON 21ST CENTURY POLICING

Pillar 6: Officer Safety & Wellness Potential Recommendations for Deliberation Draft February 24, 2015

6.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Justice should implement a multi-faceted officer safety and wellness initiative. This initiative should include the promotion of critical incident stress debriefings and follow-up visits with psychologists after critical incidents.
6.1.1 Action Step: The DOJ should establish and fund a national "Blue Alert" warning system.
6.1.2 Action Step: DOJ should establish a mental health task force to study mental health issues and recommend treatments unique to officers.
6.1.3 Action Step: DOJ should support the continuing research into the efficacy of an annual mental health check for officers, as well as fitness, resilience, and nutrition.
6.1.4 Action Step: DOJ should support and fund the labor management partnership.
6.1.5 Action Step: DOJ should establish and fund a national toll-free hotline for police officers to call for peer counseling and referral to in person peer driven assistance. An advisory board should be formed to guide the creation of the hotline services.
6.2 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should promote safety and wellness at every level of the organization.
6.2.1 Action Step: Agencies should implement programs and best practices identified by the DOJ initiative.
6.3 RECOMMENDATION: The IRS should require IRS qualified pension plans to recognize fitness for duty examinations as definitive evidence of duty or non-duty related disability.
6.4 RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Justice should encourage and assist departments in the implementation of scientifically supported shift lengths by law enforcement.
6.4.1 Action Step: DOJ should fund research into the efficacy of limiting the total number of hours an officer should work within a 24-48 hour period including special findings with regard to the maximum hours an officer should work in a high risk or high stress environment (i.e. public demonstrations).
6.5 RECOMMENDATION: DOJ should insure that PSOB benefits are provided to survivors of police officers killed while working REGARDLESS of whether <ul style="list-style-type: none">• officer used safety equipment (seatbelt or anti-ballistic vest)• officer death was by suicide if attributable to PTSD, or other employment related cause• No penalty to families if officers are killed even if not wearing seatbelts
6.6 RECOMMENDATION: The Federal government should provide through direct grants funding to state and local law enforcement agencies for each officer to be provided individual tactical first-aid kits with appropriate training and Anti-ballistic vest and replacements for vests when damaged or beyond the manufacturers recommended service life (either through expansion of the BVP Act or by another mechanism). Part of narrative would include hemorrhage control training and policies for body armor...The President

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should recommend the adoption of the Hartford Consensus as national policy to create a national policy to enhance survivability from mass-casualty shooting events.

6.6.1 Action Step: Congress should reauthorize the bulletproof vest partnership program.

6.7 RECOMMENDATION: The Department of Justice should expand efforts to collect and analyze data on not just officer deaths, but also injuries and “near misses”.

This data is critical to understanding both prevention and response. (Eastman testimony) ...ongoing academic research about trends, commonalities, and prevention strategies.

6.8 RECOMMENDATION: The DOJ should encourage that all law enforcement agencies institute internal procedural justice procedures.

One source of officer stress is the internal organization...examples: basic due process rights, basic collective bargaining rights allowing all officers to elect a certified representative for purposes of negotiating terms and conditions of employment, and require that disciplinary action be for just cause with a review process including fair and impartial review terminating in arbitration.

6.8.1 Action Step: DOJ should give preference in funding decisions or grant awards to joint and cooperative police labor and management requests.

6.9 RECOMMENDATION: Departments should adopt policies that focus on requiring officers to wear ballistic vests and seat belts and training to raise awareness of the potential consequences if they fail to do so.

6.9.1 Action Step: We need some type of mandatory policies for officers wearing of soft body armor anytime they are going to be engaging in enforcement activities, uniformed or not. Agencies MUST provide these for all commissioned personnel.

6.9.2 Action Step: We need mandatory policies requiring officers to wear seat belts. No exceptions! Discomfort and inconvenience should not be accepted as excuses.

6.9.3 Action Step: Arrive Alive Campaign to promote 100% seat belt usage. Use incentives to increase participation, use peer pressure—it is not about you, it is about your family and your department.

6.10 RECOMMENDATION: The federal government should develop and enact Peer Review Error Management Legislation.

6.10.1 Action Step: Facilitate legislation protections and national policy to develop a robust peer review error management program for U.S. law enforcement. (non-punitive peer review).

6.11 RECOMMENDATION: Federal Government should explore opportunities for Departments should purchase vehicles equipped with Vehicle Collision Prevention Technology "smart car" technology that will reduce the number of accidents.