



INTERNATIONAL UNION OF POLICE ASSOCIATIONS AFL-CIO

THE ONLY UNION FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

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Written Testimony of The International Union of Police Associations, AFL-CIO, to The President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing.

The International Union of Police Associations represents more than 100,000 active-duty, rank and file law enforcement professionals and emergency medical personnel throughout this nation as well as in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Our Board of Directors is all active-duty police officers and our Executive Officers are each retired law enforcement officers. We are proud to offer our views on some of the issues being examined by this Task Force.

The Role of Police Leadership

We believe that police leadership, from the Chief of Police to the newest hired line officer is responsible for the effective and efficient delivery of unbiased, professional law enforcement services to the communities they serve. We further believe that the Chief of Police along with their Mayor and City Council cannot accurately assess the impact of policy and procedures on that service and its impact on garnering public trust and cooperation without input from those men and women who are actually putting those policies into practice. The line officers are not meeting with community activist or political pundits, but with everyday residents of their communities. They are an invaluable link between the people and those elected or chosen to lead them. Failing to access the information and input they receive from their daily interactions with the recipients of police service is not conducive to improving the relationship with the department and the community.

We believe that management should regularly meet and confer with the line police officer's local representatives to receive the input and feedback from the men and women on the front lines.

Civilian Oversight

Civilian oversight has long been a staple of policing agencies. City Councils, County Supervisors and Civil Service Commissions all provide review and oversight of police policies, procedures and disciplinary matters. We believe that any additional review by a panel of civilians in the matters of policies and procedures could be helpful.

We recommend that any review board chosen from the public at large should be advisory only and not trump the decisions and judgments of those elected to be responsible for those matters. They must possess some rudimentary knowledge of police work and the stresses associated with the application of it. To that end, we recommend that any member of such an advisory panel, be required to undergo training including shoot-don't shoot exercises and preparation which includes pursuit driving and force scenarios coupled with role playing and problem solving in calls including domestic violence, traffic stops and crowd control.

Early Intervention Systems

Any early intervention system must, to be fair, view each officer in their totality. A numbers matrix, tallying up citizen complaints to trigger intervention is only feasible and credible if the officer's assignment and activity are weighed along with the number of uses of force or citizen complaints. An officer assigned to serve felony warrants in a high crime area is going to have a greater number of negative contacts than a school resource officer Beverly Hills.

An intervention should be geared towards assisting the officer in identifying any unifying reasons for negative contacts and providing training and/or counselling to alleviate or eliminate the officer's role in the matter. The intervention might also determine that the officer is not at fault and, in fact, be a target of criminal elements attempting to have him moved from their area so as to enhance their ability to conduct their criminal enterprise.

Disciplinary Systems

Any disciplinary system must have the confidence of the cadre that it is fair, unbiased and equally dispensed. The goal of discipline is to alter behavior when sub-standard performance is discovered. There must be due process, transparency and thoroughness throughout. In cases of minor misconduct, the discipline must be proportional to the infraction and progressive for repeated infractions. Cases should be finalized in a timely manner so that there is a direct connection between the infraction and the imposition of discipline. This becomes even more important when allegations, if proven to be true, are of a serious or criminal nature.

Handling Mass Demonstrations and the Use of Military Equipment

Most large departments have provided extensive training and experience in handling mass demonstrations. The same cannot be said for many of the smaller agencies. Budget constraints have prohibited this type of training.

If the Federal government has a role in police training, one of those roles should be providing funding and resources so that smaller agencies can participate in crowd control training and exercises.

Military equipment is a charged description of some of the apparatus made available to law enforcement to facilitate the safe and efficient exercise of their duties. Its use was made necessary by the enhanced sophistication and armament of the criminal elements ranging from drug cartels to terrorists, both foreign and domestic. The police cannot protect the public if they cannot protect themselves. Military equipment should continue to be available to agencies who can demonstrate a need for it and who can ensure that proper training and policy is in place to safeguard the public when it is deployed.

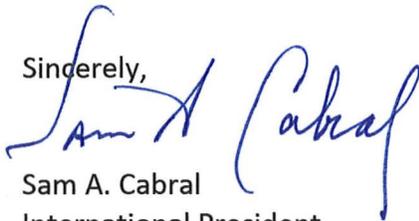
Research and Data Collection

We recommend that it be mandated for ALL departments and agencies to participate in a national database collecting and disseminating information concerning officer involved shootings, in custody deaths and assaults on officers. We do not see the need for ethnicity to be included in this collection, but if it is, then it should be collected for those cases involving assaults on officers as well as the seven major crimes so as to provide an accurate background in the drawing of conclusions from the numbers alone.

In Conclusion

The International Union of Police Associations is confident that all parties involved in this study are trying to do the right thing. We come from very different backgrounds and experiences, but we have faith in many members of this esteemed panel. That being said, this disconnect between the police and some members of the community will not grow smaller so long as those who profit from this conflict are in advisory roles within this administration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sam A. Cabral". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sam" and last name "Cabral" clearly legible.

Sam A. Cabral
International President