

**DELORES JONES-BROWN  
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF LAW, POLICE SCIENCE &  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE ADMINISTRATION  
JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
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NEIGHBORHOOD POLICING: A SAFE, RESPECTFUL AND EFFECTIVE  
COMMUNITY POLICING STRATEGY**

I am Delores Jones-Brown, Professor in the Department of Law, Police Science and Criminal Justice Administration at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York and founder of the John Jay College Center on Race, Crime and Justice and a member of the executive board of the Center for Policing Equity.<sup>i</sup> I would like to thank the Task Force for this opportunity to submit written comments and to give oral testimony and recommendations.

My professional expertise is in the area of police-community relations, the impact of stop and frisk policing practices and the influence of race on police-community interactions. I am the author or co-editor of 4 books on race and the American criminal justice system and numerous book chapters, articles and legal commentaries on race and policing.

I come to today's session wearing several hats—as an academic researcher, as a legally trained intellectual, as a former prosecutor who worked closely with police officers, as an educator of sworn police officers for more than 25 years, as a scholar activist who has spent the last ten years or more working with and listening to community-based and grassroots organizations talk about what they want from police service in their communities; and as the mother of a African American teenage son, the wife of an African American male husband, and the sister of an African American male brother--all of whom I spend a great deal of time worrying whether they will have an encounter with the police that will leave them criminalized, hospitalized or deceased.

In my January 9<sup>th</sup> written comments, I recommended that urban police departments be mandated to pilot a “neighborhood policing” (NP) community policing strategy similar to that implemented in San Diego, California. During the period 1991 to 1998, this approach is credited with having produced greater reductions in violent crime than those achieved in New York City.<sup>ii</sup> Crime dropped in San Diego, and continues to remain low, without increasing the number of annual arrests<sup>iii</sup>; without substantially increasing the number of sworn officers<sup>iv</sup>; and, without increasing the volume of citizen complaints.<sup>v</sup>

This year, amid concerns about how police departments should and should not handle community protests, the San Diego police department organized a Martin Luther King Day march.<sup>vi</sup> This kind of police-sponsored event presents a unique trust-building opportunity that cannot adequately be assessed by quantitative measures. It also presents unique opportunities for qualitative research that explores the impact of such an event on both those who are policed and those who are doing the policing. Research questions might include inquiries into the department's motivation(s) for sponsoring such an event, its implementation strategy, potential impediments and how they were overcome. Surveys of both community members

and police personnel before, during and after such an event might provide valuable insight into the feasibility of such events as mechanisms for building mutual respect and cooperation.

As noted in my January 9th comments, “neighborhood policing” is a form of community policing that incorporates a problem solving or problem oriented approach. Problem oriented policing (POP) has been identified as one of the strongest evidence-based policing approaches<sup>vii</sup> but some policing scholars acknowledge that problem oriented policing may be an overused term and that many police departments’ attempts to utilize what they identify as problem oriented policing fail for different reasons: including police agencies deciding, without community collaboration, the problem they want to address; or, favoring the use of a particular method.<sup>viii</sup>

Community members complain that, under some departments’ implementation of POP, specific individuals or groups within the community are identified as problematic based on their status—e.g. immigrants, racial, ethnic or religious minorities, the poor,<sup>ix</sup> the young<sup>x</sup>, or those with non-conforming gender identities<sup>xi</sup>. They also complain that police policy or individual officers decide to give some community voices greater priority than others, typically being more responsive to complaints from business owners, property owners, older adults, church-goers and the employed. The San Diego neighborhood policing approach reduces these risks by utilizing the voices of a wide array of neighborhood residences in both problem identification and solution development.

The neighborhood policing approach allows police departments to tailor policing *service* and *enforcement techniques* to the unique needs of distinct neighborhoods. Recognition of these unique needs requires more than computerized maps of calls for service or crime complaints. It requires the establishment of genuine relationships with many different kinds of community residents. In Detroit, under one chief, this meant police officers volunteering to mentor the children of incarcerated parents, to help break the cycle of intergenerational imprisonment.<sup>xii</sup> In Orlando it meant a chief going door to door to invite housing project residents to a meeting with her in their development’s community room, with the ultimate purpose of successfully solving a triple homicide.<sup>xiii</sup> In Houston it meant establishing a time and means for residents to “chat with the chief” by phone to build relationships, increase crime reporting and clearance rates.<sup>xiv</sup> In Philadelphia, it meant the police partnering with a community development organization to help community residents reclaim a local park from drug dealers, after which the residents obtained grant funding to maintain the park on their own.<sup>xv</sup> In Salt Lake it meant the chief reaching out to the immigrant community to assure them that their immigration status would not interfere with their rights as crime victims.<sup>xvi</sup> In San Diego it meant utilizing hundreds of volunteers to facilitate the connection between the police department and community residents and to help connect residents to other non-police services.<sup>xvii</sup> Crime statistics are only one means of measuring the effectiveness of these relational policing approaches. Funded qualitative research is a necessity to help provide the evidence-base needed to insure that police departments are incentivized to continue or to implement similar approaches.

Neighborhood policing provides an opportunity for police departments to do things *with* residents in the co-production of public safety rather than doing things *to* or *for* them based on theories that emerge from outside their geographic, social and cultural boundaries. While much has been made of the police role in the crime declines in major cities over the past two decades, there has also been a significant growth in community-based anti-crime and anti-violence efforts. These community-based approaches are conceived of and implemented by civilians, typically civilians within or from high-crime and highly policed neighborhoods. Such approaches do not get their fair share of credit for addressing urban violence and their impact tends to be under-documented and unreported. Recent studies conducted by the John Jay College Research and Evaluation Center documented the existence of 25 such programs operating in New York City utilizing the Cure Violence approach, also known as Chicago Ceasefire. The research revealed that for the period 2010 to 2013 homicides were down 18 percent in neighborhoods with Cure Violence programs and up 69 percent in statistically matched neighborhoods without such programs.<sup>xviii</sup>

These programs rely on street workers or “violence interrupters”—typically ex-gang members or formerly incarcerated individuals-- rather than the police to reduce the risk that community residents, especially young people, will become involved in shootings and other serious crimes. In other New York neighborhoods, the police department utilizes the Boston Ceasefire model, also known as focused deterrence, to interdict gang and other criminal activity. Evaluation research has documented the effectiveness of both approaches in some locations. Though not totally independent of police support, the Cure Violence approach empowers community residents to police themselves. The focused deterrence approach involves interaction between the police and community residents but the ultimate power in the relationship lies with the police. A neighborhood policing strategy would allow community residents to determine which of these two approaches, if either, best fits its public safety needs and its desire for community autonomy.

Similarly, while in most major cities, policing resources tend to be deployed in areas that are highly populated by racial and ethnic groups of color; and, people of color (including Black police officers)<sup>xix</sup> are more likely to experience fatal use of force by police, there are few people of color who are identified as policing experts or academic researchers who specialize in the study of police practices. This imbalance in who studies policing and who gets policed contributes to gaps in our knowledge of how best to address recurring problems of biased perceptions about the dangerousness and criminality of people of color, especially in urban spaces.<sup>xx</sup> Youth of color, and especially males, experience policing at higher rates than most other segments of the population but are rarely included in discussions about how best to effectively deliver policing services. The following five recommendations are intended to promote the goal of building community trust and justice and to give highly policed communities meaningful input to how they will be policed.

## Recommendations

### **1) Provide federal funding to pilot neighborhood policing in urban police departments:**

NP can be piloted in one or more precincts/districts served by applying police departments, then evaluated, adjusted and expanded. Most jurisdictions have some structures in place, such as community liaison's and periodic community meetings that should facilitate the implementation process.

### **2) Commission a "How To" Neighborhood Policing Manual and consulting team:**

The police personnel<sup>xxi</sup> who implemented the community engagement techniques that have been pointed out in this testimony should be invited to join with a collection of community members (including those involved in community-based anti-violence programs), other police personnel and a diverse group of academics to prepare a report that documents their strategy for relationship building, the pros and cons of implementing the policing approach mentioned, the anticipated and achieved outcomes, the challenges and resistance faced, the means used to overcome those challenges, and recommendations and cautions for implementing the approach on a larger scale and/or in other jurisdictions. Issues regarding the sustainability of such efforts need also be addressed.

### **3) Provide federal funding for implementation and outcome evaluation research for the neighborhood policing pilots.**

**4) Mandate that each evaluation effort include a researcher of color as a principal investigator and include a mechanism for training junior faculty and students of color to conduct police practice and accountability research.** A growing body of research has established the need for culturally competent professionals and researchers when addressing crucial social phenomena.<sup>xxii</sup>

### **5) Provide federal funding for a series of youth-led summits where urban youth report-back about the impact of neighborhood policing in their community.**

These recommendations are put forth in the interest of producing sustained and sustainable change in urban policing and the policing of people of color in all settings.

## NOTES

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<sup>i</sup> Housed at UCLA, the Center for Policing Equity (CPE) is a research consortium that promotes police transparency and accountability by facilitating innovative research collaborations between law enforcement agencies and empirical social scientists.

<sup>ii</sup> See Bernard Harcourt, "Policing Disorder," *Boston Review*, April/May 2002 (available at: <http://bostonreview.net/BR27.2/harcourt.html>)

<sup>iii</sup> Between 1993 and 1996, arrests fell by 15 percent in San Diego while increasing by 23 percent in NYC (Judy Greene, 1999., “Zero Tolerance: A Case Study in Police Policies and Practices in New York City”. *Crime and Delinquency* Vol. 45 (183, 184). Between 1980 and 2013, misdemeanor arrests in New York City increased more than 246 percent. See Preeti Chauhan et al “Trends in Misdemeanor Arrests in New York” John Jay College of Criminal Justice, November 2014.

<sup>iv</sup> Between 1993 and 1996, New York experienced an overall 37.4 percent reduction in Crime and increased the number of sworn officers by 39.5 percent. San Diego experienced a comparable reduction in crime (36.8%) but increased its police force by only 6.2% (Judy Greene, 1999.) After 2000, San Diego continued to have roughly three times fewer police officers than NYC (1.6 per 1,000 residents versus 4.6).

<sup>v</sup> Ibid, Greene, 1999, 184. This was not the case for NYC were civil suits became the largest City pay out for governmental departments. See John C. Liu, *City of New York Office of the Comptroller Claims Report Fiscal Year 2009*.

<sup>vi</sup> See Michael Rocha, January 17, 2015, “Marching Together for Peace and Unity” *U-T San Diego* at <http://www.utsandiego.com/news/2015/jan/17/mlk-peace-march-logan-heights-san-diego-police/>

<sup>vii</sup> David Weisburd, Cody W. Telep, Joshua C. Hinkle & John E. Eck: *The Effects of Problem-Oriented Policing on Crime and Disorder*. A Campbell Collaboration systematic review 2008.

<sup>viii</sup> See Dennis Kenny discussing the failures of POP at the Problem Oriented Policing Conference, September 12, 2011, Seattle, Washington available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hBBXFplaaU>

<sup>ix</sup> Including the homeless, panhandlers, squeegee men or residents of public housing.

<sup>x</sup> See Sean Gardiner “Report Finds Stop-And-Frisk focused on Black Youth, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 9, 2012 reporting that in 2011 the number of recorded stops for black males between the ages of 14 and 24 in New York City exceeded their number in the general population by nearly 10,000.; available at <http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2012/05/09/report-finds-stop-and-frisk-focused-on-black-youth/>

<sup>xi</sup> See Beth Richie, 2012, *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America’s Prison Nation*, pps. 12-14.

<sup>xii</sup> Under former Detroit police chief, Ralph Godbee, Jr.

<sup>xiii</sup> Under former Orlando police chief, Val Demings

<sup>xiv</sup> Under current Houston police chief, Charles McClelland

<sup>xv</sup> North Philadelphia’s Rainbow de Colores Park in the police department’s 25<sup>th</sup> district.

<sup>xvi</sup> Salt Lake City’s current chief Chris Burbank

<sup>xvii</sup> Former San Diego chief, Jerry Sanders

<sup>xviii</sup> Butts, Jeffrey A., Kevin T. Wolff, Evan Misshula, and Sheyla Delgado (2015). “Effectiveness of the Cure Violence Model in New York City”. [Research Brief 2015-01]. New York, NY: John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Research & Evaluation Center.

<sup>xix</sup> See New York State Task Force on Police-on-Police Shootings report *Reducing Inherent Danger* (2010).

<sup>xx</sup> See Jennifer Eberhardt et al, “Seeing Black: Race, Crime and Visual Processing,” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 87, No. 6, 876-893.

<sup>xxi</sup> The fact that most have left policing does not make their work any less important and can provide them with the liberty of being more candid in their assessments and recommendations.

<sup>xxii</sup> See Delores Jones-Brown and Erica King-Toler, 2011, “The Significance of Race in Contemporary Urban Policing Policy,” in *U.S. Criminal Justice Policy: A Contemporary Reader* edited by Karim Ismaili, pps. 39-41.