

Ohio Task Force on Community-Police Relations

University of Toledo Public Forum Summary

2/26/2015

Office of Criminal Justice Services



On December 12, 2014, Governor John Kasich signed Executive Order 2014-06K announcing the creation of the **Ohio Task Force on Community-Police Relations**. The charge of the Task Force is threefold: 1) To explore the cause of fractured relationships between communities and law enforcement, 2) To examine strategies to strengthen trust between the community and law enforcement in order to resolve the underlying causes of friction; and 3) To provide the Governor with a report with recommendations about best practices available to communities.

The Task Force is comprised of 24 members, identified below:

- Co-chairs: John Born, Director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, and State Senator Nina Turner;
- Honorary co-chairs: Senator George Voinovich, Justice Evelyn Stratton, and Congressman Lou Stokes;
- Members of the Ohio House of Representatives : Representative Tim Derickson and Representative Alicia Reece;
- Members of the Ohio Senate: Senator Cliff Hite and Senator Sandra Williams;
- Department of Commerce Director Andre Porter;
- Ohio Attorney General's Office designee Tannisha Bell;
- Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice designee Sara Andrews;
- Law enforcement representatives: Fayette County Sheriff Vernon Stanforth, who also represents the Buckeye State Sheriff's Association, Akron Police Department Officer Brian Armstead, and Oregon Police Department Chief Michael Navarre;
- Community and faith-based leader representatives: Tom Roberts of the NAACP, Reverend Damon Lynch of the Cincinnati Collaborative, Dr. Ronnie Dunn of Cleveland State University, and Bishop George Murry of the Diocese of Youngstown;
- Business leaders: Bernie F. Moreno, president of the Collection Auto Group, Anthony Munoz, former Cincinnati Bengal and Hall of Fame Inductee;
- Ohio Prosecutor's Association representative Ron O'Brien;
- Cincinnati City Council member Amy Murray; and
- Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies Executive Director Phil Cole.

In accordance with the Executive Order, a series of four public forums is to be held in four geographically diverse regions of the state to seek input and comment from all Ohioans, especially from Ohioans in those communities at the heart of the crisis, which includes African-American males and their families. Additionally, the Task Force is soliciting expert testimony on topics relevant to the community-police relations issue.

February 26, 2015: University of Toledo Public Forum

The third public forum was held on February 26, 2015 at 4:30 PM at University of Toledo's Scott Park Auditorium. The forum commenced with welcoming remarks by the co-chairs, the facilitator, and University of Toledo Interim President Dr. Nagi Naganathan. This was followed by the testimony of two subject matter experts: Mike Woody, President of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) International, and

Toledo Police Sergeant Anita Madison, Project Manager for the Toledo Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (TCIRV). At the conclusion of their testimony, a brief break was given, and public testimony began at 6:30 PM. All individuals were required to sign up prior to speaking. They were given three minutes to testify, and a digital clock was made visible to the speaker. Twenty-seven speakers provided testimony during the forum. In addition, one individual submitted written testimony.

The forum concluded at 8:45 PM.

The following pages contain a summary of the expert testimony of Mike Woody and Sgt. Madison, a summary of themes identified throughout the public testimony, and a summary of recommendations provided during the public testimony.

Expert Testimony Summary

Mike Woody, President, Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) International

- Mr. Woody provided a brief overview of the history leading up to the development of CIT
 - In 1988, the Supreme Court ruled that the Canton Police Department was ‘deliberately indifferent’ by not training their officers in first aid on a regular basis because the probability of needing to use first aid in police work was so high.
 - Deliberate indifference can now apply to police departments that lack mental health training, as roughly 10 percent of the calls for which officers are dispatched involves a mentally ill person in crisis.
- Ohio CIT training was brought to Ohio in 2000. Since then,
 - Approximately 7,500 Ohio officers (33% of Ohio’s full-time officers) have taken the CIT course to date.
 - 551 agencies out of 950 (58%) have sent officers to a CIT training course
 - All major cities are participating in CIT
- Contrary to what many may believe, studies show that CIT training should not be mandatory for all officers, for several reasons:
 - Not all officers care about mental health training. It requires special officers to work with this population.
 - CIT officers handle many more mental health calls than ‘regular’ officers, which builds experience and rapport with community members.
 - CIT officers feel committed and special when they are one of the select few who receive the training.
 - The community cannot accommodate training for every officer.
- Core elements of CIT
 - Officers should volunteer for participation
 - Officers should be monitored after training
 - There should be a partnership with the community to facilitate CIT training
 - There should be recognition and awards for CIT participants
- In a recent incident in Cleveland in which a person mental illness died during a police encounter, it must be noted that despite the fact that Cleveland has 540 trained CIT officers, a CIT officer was not sent on the call. CIT is about more than just training officers. There must be appropriate strategies in place beyond CIT training to bring about a culture change.

Sergeant Anita Madison , Toledo Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (TCIRV)

- Sgt. Madison described the Toledo Community Initiative to Reduce Violence, or TCIRV, as a citywide collaboration between law enforcement, service providers, and the community which utilizes a focused deterrence strategy to reduce gun violence.
- A very small percentage of the population is responsible for a majority of the violence in a city. In Toledo, less than one percent of the population commits 70 percent of the violence.
- When implemented with fidelity, TCIRV can:

- Reduce incarceration, through its targeted approach to enforcement
- Help offenders, by providing access to services for those who want to make a change in their lives
- Address racial conflicts, by bringing law enforcement and the community together in a shared goal to reduce violence
- Dramatically reduce gun violence, from 30 to 70 percent when implemented with fidelity
- Prior to TCIRV, gun violence was the #1 cause of homicide in Toledo. Two years later, it was the #3 cause of homicide.
- Sgt. Madison stated that focused deterrence strategies like TCIRV successfully build positive relationships with the community because they focus on a small number of offenders, such as youth gang members or repeat violent offenders. However, these strategies will not completely eliminate the need for other police procedures if an officer feels threatened.
- Sgt. Madison spoke of the difficulties in recruiting minority officers. She commented on the difficulty in recruiting black officers in the current tense environment evident throughout the country. She also stated that policing is a tough job and it is not something that appeals to everyone. Sgt. Madison felt it is important to establish rapport with the school system and be present in the schools to talk to youth before they get caught up in the criminal justice system.
- The Toledo Chief of Police was available to take questions regarding hiring practices of the department. Chief Kral provided the steps involved, and noted that Toledo recently created a full-time recruiting unit to help with the hiring process.
 - Candidates take a civil service test (70% pass rate).
 - Candidates fill out a 20+ page background investigation form, and record checks are conducted on every place that they have lived.
 - A panel discusses the findings of the background investigation with the candidates.
 - An assessment team of officers discusses the negatives associated with each candidate. Too many negatives disqualify someone from being hired. There is an appeals process for people who are disqualified.
 - Interviews take place with candidates.
 - Candidates are ranked and the police chief picks his class.
 - Candidates take part in physical fitness testing, and following this, they begin Police Academy.

Public Testimony Themes

Law enforcement officers must be engaged with the community.

- Law enforcement officers need to remember that they are also members of the community.
- Police departments need to do more with regard to recruitment and hiring to reflect the communities they serve.
- The community-police relationship is a two-way street. The community needs to make an effort to reach out to law enforcement as well.

Law enforcement is not viewed as being legitimate by the communities they serve.

- People do not trust the police and are afraid of them. They cannot trust that the officers responding to a call will not be a threat to them.
- Citizens are afraid to 'snitch' to police for fear of consequences and or perceived lack of action.
- The police 'Code of Silence' must be addressed.
- It is important to remember that not every person in uniform is out to harm citizens. This kind of thinking is discriminatory.

Law enforcement officers must be held accountable.

- Police cannot be above the law.
- Those in power need to be held accountable.
- There should be independent investigations for law enforcement officer misconduct.

Citizens perceive a lack of procedural justice.

- Law enforcement must protect and serve ALL people. Black lives matter.
- Communities need to be treated equally (e.g., police response times, punishment).
- Some officers are attracted to the power that their position holds. Officers must have compassion.
- There are a disproportionate number of black males in jail today. The justice system has never been fair for people of color.
- There are no checks and balances in the criminal justice system to ensure fair and equal treatment.
- In some communities, it feels like law enforcement are 'fishing' to find a problem because there is the perception that black males are more dangerous than others. As a result, the community feels targeted and over policed.

Resources are needed for law enforcement.

- Training for officers is important. All officers should receive specialized trainings for interacting with specialized populations.
- Officers also need to understand how to interact with people from different cultures, as officers tend to be aggressive with cultures they don't understand.
- Counseling for officers is also important. There should be mandatory screenings and checkups to ensure officers are emotionally well and do not suffer from mental illness.

Public Testimony Suggestions and Recommendations

For Law Enforcement and Prosecutors

- Training is needed for all law enforcement on how to interact with special populations.
- Department policies and procedures should be made available online.
- It is important to provide officers with counseling who may be experiencing emotional instability or mental illness.
- Ensure that law enforcement agencies are using best practices with regard to recruitment and hiring.
- Cultural awareness training is needed for law enforcement officers.
- Increase public awareness of the processes and actions that community members can take to make their neighborhoods safer.

For the Community and Schools

- Teach children in school how to interact with police.
- Get the community involved with police through programs such as block watch and other processes that encourage citizens to report crime to police.
- Prevention needs to be a big part of the solution. Provide prevention programs for youth in schools, such as the “Just Us” program.

For the Governor’s Office, State Agencies, and Lawmakers

- Consider implementing some ‘minimum standards’ for law enforcement agency policies in Ohio.
- Grant funding should be made available to help put people to work, as this systemic issue contributes to the problem.
- Independent investigations, such as what is being proposed in Wisconsin, should be considered for cases of police-involved shootings.
- A forgiveness system should be in place for non-violent felons that have no further offenses.
- Provide for research on cultural practices in police departments, such as racially-biased policing, etc.).
- Look closely at the policies and procedures for body cameras, particularly with regard to storage issues and privacy of victims.