

President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Summary

Description

Here are the “recommendations” and “action items” from the Interim Report. [The whole report is here.](#)^[1]

0.1 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION: The President should support and provide funding for the creation of a National Crime and Justice Task Force to review and evaluate all components of the criminal justice system for the purpose of making recommendations to the country on comprehensive criminal justice reform.

0.2 OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATION: The President should promote programs that take a comprehensive and inclusive look at community based initiatives that address the core issues of poverty, education, health, and safety.

Pillar One: Building Trust & Legitimacy

Procedurally just behavior is based on four central principles:

1. Treating people with dignity and respect
2. Giving individuals ‘voice’ during encounters
3. Being neutral and transparent in decision making
4. Conveying trustworthy motives

1.1 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement culture should embrace a guardian mindset to build public trust and legitimacy. Toward that end, police and sheriffs’ departments should adopt procedural justice as the guiding principle for internal and external policies and practices to guide their interactions with the citizens they serve.

1.2 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should acknowledge the role of policing in past and present injustice and discrimination and how it is a hurdle to the promotion of community trust.

1.2.1 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should develop and disseminate case studies that provide examples where past injustices were publicly acknowledged by law enforcement agencies in a manner to help build community trust.

1.3 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should establish a culture of transparency and accountability in order to build public trust and legitimacy. This will help ensure decision making is understood and in accord with stated policy.

1.3.1 ACTION ITEM: To embrace a culture of transparency, law enforcement agencies should make all department policies available for public review and regularly post on the department’s website information about stops, summonses, arrests, reported crime, and other law enforcement data aggregated by demographics.

1.3.2 ACTION ITEM: When serious incidents occur, including those involving alleged police misconduct, agencies should communicate with citizens and the media swiftly, openly, and neutrally, respecting areas where the law requires confidentiality. p11

1.4 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should promote legitimacy internally within the organization by applying the principles of procedural justice.

1.4.1 ACTION ITEM: In order to achieve internal legitimacy, law enforcement agencies should involve employees in the process of developing policies and procedures.

1.4.2 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agency leadership should examine opportunities to incorporate procedural justice into the internal discipline process, placing additional importance on values adherence rather than adherence to rules. Union leadership should be partners in this process.

1.5 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should proactively promote public trust by initiating positive nonenforcement activities to engage communities that typically have high rates of investigative and enforcement involvement with government agencies.

1.5.1 ACTION ITEM: In order to achieve external legitimacy, law enforcement agencies should involve the community in the process of developing and evaluating policies and procedures.

1.5.2 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should institute residency incentive programs such as Resident Officer Programs.

1.5.3 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should create opportunities in schools and communities for positive, nonenforcement interactions with police. Agencies should also publicize the beneficial outcomes and images of positive, trust-building partnerships and initiatives.

1.6 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should consider the potential damage to public trust when implementing crime fighting strategies.

1.6.1 ACTION ITEM: Research conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of crime fighting strategies should specifically look at the potential for collateral damage of any given strategy on community trust and legitimacy.

1.7 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should track the level of trust in police by their communities just as they measure changes in crime. Annual community surveys, ideally standardized across jurisdictions and with accepted sampling protocols, can measure how policing in that community affects public trust.

1.7.1 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should develop survey tools and instructions for use of such a model to prevent local departments from incurring the expense and to allow for consistency across jurisdictions.

1.8 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should strive to create a workforce that contains a broad range of diversity including race, gender, language, life experience, and cultural background to improve understanding and effectiveness in dealing with all communities.

1.8.1 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should create a Law Enforcement Diversity Initiative designed to help communities diversify law enforcement departments to reflect the demographics of the community.

1.8.2 ACTION ITEM: The department overseeing this initiative should help localities learn best practices for recruitment, training, and outreach to improve the diversity as well as the cultural and linguistic responsiveness of law enforcement agencies.

1.8.3 ACTION ITEM: Successful law enforcement agencies should be highlighted and celebrated and those with less diversity should be offered technical assistance to facilitate change.

1.8.4 ACTION ITEM: Discretionary federal funding for law enforcement programs could be influenced by that department's efforts to improve their diversity and cultural and linguistic responsiveness.

1.8.5 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to explore more flexible staffing models.

1.9 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should build relationships based on trust with immigrant communities. This is central to overall public safety.

1.9.1 ACTION ITEM: Decouple federal immigration enforcement from routine local policing for civil enforcement and nonserious crime.

1.9.2 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should ensure reasonable and equitable language access for all persons who have encounters with police or who enter the criminal justice system.²⁷

1.9.3 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should remove civil immigration information from the FBI's National Crime Information Center database.

Pillar Two: Policy & Oversight

2.1 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should collaborate with community members to develop policies and strategies in communities and neighborhoods disproportionately affected by crime for deploying resources that aim to reduce crime by improving relationships, greater community engagement, and cooperation.

2.1.1 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should incentivize this collaboration through a variety of programs that focus on public health, education, mental health, and other programs not traditionally part of the criminal justice system.

2.2 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should have comprehensive policies on the use of force that include training, investigations, prosecutions, data collection, and information sharing. These policies must be clear, concise, and openly available for public inspection.

2.2.1 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agency policies for training on use of force should emphasize de-escalation and alternatives to arrest or summons in situations where appropriate.

2.2.2 ACTION ITEM: These policies should also mandate external and independent criminal investigations in cases of police use of force resulting in death, officer-involved shootings resulting in injury or death, or in-custody deaths.

2.2.3 ACTION ITEM: The task force encourages policies that mandate the use of external and independent prosecutors in cases of police use of force resulting in death, officer-involved shootings resulting in injury or death, or in-custody deaths.

2.2.4 ACTION ITEM: Policies on use of force should also require agencies to collect, maintain, and report data to the Federal Government on all officer-involved shootings, whether fatal or nonfatal, as well as any in-custody death.

2.2.5 ACTION ITEM: Policies on use of force should clearly state what types of information will be released, when, and in what situation, to maintain transparency.

2.2.6 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should establish a Serious Incident Review Board comprising sworn staff and community members to review cases involving officer involved shootings and other serious incidents that have the potential to damage community trust or confidence in the agency. The purpose of this board should be to identify any administrative, supervisory, training, tactical, or policy issues that need to be addressed.

2.3 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to implement nonpunitive peer review of critical incidents separate from criminal and administrative investigations.

2.4 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies are encouraged to adopt identification procedures that implement scientifically supported practices that eliminate or minimize presenter bias or influence.

2.5 RECOMMENDATION: All federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies should report and make available to the public census data regarding the composition of their departments including race, gender, age, and other relevant demographic data.

2.5.1 ACTION ITEM: The Bureau of Justice Statistics should add additional demographic questions to the Law Enforcement Management and Administrative Statistics (LEMAS) survey in order to meet the intent of this recommendation.

2.6 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should be encouraged to collect, maintain, and analyze demographic data on all detentions (stops, frisks, searches, summonses, and arrests). This data should be disaggregated by school and non-school contacts.

2.6.1 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government could further incentivize universities and other organizations to partner with police departments to collect data and develop knowledge about analysis and benchmarks as well as to develop tools and templates that help departments manage data collection and analysis.

2.7 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should create policies and procedures for policing mass demonstrations that employ a continuum of managed tactical resources that are designed to minimize the appearance of a military operation and avoid using provocative tactics and equipment that undermine civilian trust.

2.7.1. ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agency policies should address procedures for implementing a layered response to mass demonstrations that prioritize de-escalation and a guardian mindset.

2.7.2 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should create a mechanism for investigating complaints and issuing sanctions regarding the inappropriate use of equipment and tactics during mass demonstrations.

2.8 RECOMMENDATION: Some form of civilian oversight of law enforcement is important in order to strengthen trust with the community. Every community should define the appropriate form and structure of civilian oversight to meet the needs of that community.

2.8.1 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice, through its research arm, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), should expand its research agenda to include civilian oversight.

2.8.2 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) should provide technical assistance and collect best practices from existing civilian oversight efforts and be prepared to help cities create this structure, potentially with some matching grants and funding.

2.9 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies and municipalities should refrain from practices requiring officers to issue a predetermined number of tickets, citations, arrests, or summonses, or to initiate investigative contacts with citizens for reasons not directly related to improving public safety, such as generating revenue.

2.10 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement officers should be required to seek consent before a

search and explain that a person has the right to refuse consent when there is no warrant or probable cause. Furthermore, officers should ideally obtain written acknowledgement that they have sought consent to a search in these circumstances.

2.11 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should establish search and seizure procedures related to LGBTQ and transgender populations and adopt as policy the recommendation from the President's HIV/AIDS Task Force to cease using the possession of condoms as the sole evidence of vice.

2.12 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should adopt and enforce policies prohibiting profiling and discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, age, gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, housing status, occupation, and/or language fluency.

2.12.1 ACTION ITEM: The Bureau of Justice Statistics should add questions concerning sexual harassment of and misconduct toward LGBTQ and gender-nonconforming people by law enforcement officers to the Police Public Contact Survey.

2.12.2 ACTION ITEM: The Centers for Disease Control should add questions concerning sexual harassment of and misconduct toward LGBTQ and gender-nonconforming people by law enforcement officers to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.

2.12.3 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should promote and disseminate guidance to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies on documenting, preventing, and addressing sexual harassment and misconduct by local law enforcement agents, consistent with the recommendations of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.⁴⁷

2.13 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice, through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and Office of Justice Programs, should provide technical assistance and incentive funding to jurisdictions with small police agencies that take steps towards shared services, regional training, and consolidation.

2.14 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice, through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, should partner with the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST) to expand its National Decertification Index to serve as the National Register of Decertified Officers with the goal of covering all agencies within the United States and its territories.

Pillar Three: Technology & Social Media

3.1 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice, in consultation with the law enforcement field, should broaden the efforts of the National Institute of Justice to establish national standards for the research and development of new technology. These standards should also address compatibility and interoperability needs both within law enforcement agencies and across agencies and jurisdictions and maintain civil and human rights protections.

3.1.1 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should support the development and delivery of training to help law enforcement agencies learn, acquire, and implement technology tools and tactics that are consistent with the best practices of 21st century policing.

3.1.2 ACTION ITEM: As part of national standards, the issue of technology's impact on privacy concerns should be addressed in accordance with protections provided by constitutional law.

3.1.3 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should deploy smart technology that is designed to prevent the tampering with or manipulating of evidence in violation of policy.

3.2 RECOMMENDATION: The implementation of appropriate technology by law enforcement agencies should be designed considering local needs and aligned with national standards.

3.2.1 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should encourage public engagement and collaboration, including the use of community advisory bodies, when developing a policy for the use of a new technology.

3.2.2 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should include an evaluation or assessment process to gauge the effectiveness of any new technology, soliciting input from all levels of the agency, from line officer to leadership, as well as assessment from members of the community.⁶¹

3.2.3. ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should adopt the use of new technologies that will help them better serve people with special needs or disabilities.

3.3 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should develop best practices that can be adopted by state legislative bodies to govern the acquisition, use, retention, and dissemination of auditory, visual, and biometric data by law enforcement.

3.3.1 ACTION ITEM: As part of the process for developing best practices, the U.S. Department of Justice should consult with civil rights and civil liberties organizations, as well as law enforcement research groups and other experts, concerning the constitutional issues that can arise as a result of the use of new technologies.

3.3.2 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should create toolkits for the most effective and constitutional use of multiple forms of innovative technology that will provide state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies with a one-stop clearinghouse of information and resources.

3.3.3. ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should review and consider the Bureau of Justice Assistance's (BJA) Body Worn Camera Toolkit to assist in implementing BWCs.

3.4 RECOMMENDATION: Federal, state, local, and tribal legislative bodies should be encouraged to update public record laws.

3.5 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should adopt model policies and best practices for technology-based community engagement that increases community trust and access.

3.6 RECOMMENDATION: The Federal Government should support the development of new "less than lethal" technology to help control combative suspects.

3.6.1 ACTION ITEM: Relevant federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Defense and Justice, should expand their efforts to study the development and use of new less than lethal technologies and evaluate their impact on public safety, reducing lethal violence against citizens, Constitutionality, and officer safety.

3.7 RECOMMENDATION: The Federal Government should make the development and building of segregated radio spectrum and increased bandwidth by FirstNet for exclusive use by local, state, tribal, and federal public safety agencies a top priority.

Pillar Four: Community Policing & Crime Reduction

4.1 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should develop and adopt policies and strategies that reinforce the importance of community engagement in managing public safety.

4.1.1 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should consider adopting preferences for seeking "least harm" resolutions, such as diversion programs or warnings and citations in lieu of arrest for minor infractions.

4.2 RECOMMENDATION: Community policing should be infused throughout the culture and organizational structure of law enforcement agencies.

4.2.1 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should evaluate officers on their efforts to engage members of the community and the partnerships they build. Making this part of the performance evaluation process places an increased value on developing partnerships.

4.2.2 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should evaluate their patrol deployment practices to

allow sufficient time for patrol officers to participate in problem solving and community engagement activities.

4.2.3 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice and other public and private entities should support research into the factors that have led to dramatic successes in crime reduction in some communities through the infusion of non-discriminatory policing and to determine replicable factors that could be used to guide law enforcement agencies in other communities.

4.3 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should engage in multidisciplinary, community team approaches for planning, implementing, and responding to crisis situations with complex causal factors.

4.3.1 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should collaborate with others to develop and disseminate baseline models of this crisis intervention team approach that can be adapted to local contexts.

4.3.3 ACTION ITEM: Communities should look to involve peer support counselors as part of multidisciplinary teams when appropriate. Persons who have experienced the same trauma can provide both insight to the first responders and immediate support to individuals in crisis.

4.3.4 ACTION ITEM: Communities should be encouraged to evaluate the efficacy of these crisis intervention team approaches and hold agency leaders accountable for outcomes.

4.4 RECOMMENDATION: Communities should support a culture and practice of policing that reflects the values of protection and promotion of the dignity of all, especially the most vulnerable.

4.4.1 ACTION ITEM: Because offensive or harsh language can escalate a minor situation, law enforcement agencies should underscore the importance of language used and adopt policies directing officers to speak to individuals with respect.

4.4.1 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should develop programs that create opportunities for patrol officers to regularly interact with neighborhood residents, faith leaders, and business leaders.

4.5 RECOMMENDATION: Community policing emphasizes working with neighborhood residents to co-produce public safety. Law enforcement agencies should work with community residents to identify problems and collaborate on implementing solutions that produce meaningful results for the community.

4.5.1 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should schedule regular forums and meetings where all community members can interact with police and help influence programs and policy.

4.5.2 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should engage youth and communities in joint training with law enforcement, citizen academies, ride-alongs, problem solving teams, community action teams, and quality of life teams.

4.5.3. ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should establish formal community/citizen advisory committees to assist in developing crime prevention strategies and agency policies as well as provide input on policing issues.

4.5.4 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should adopt community policing strategies that support and work in concert with economic development efforts within communities.

4.6 RECOMMENDATION: Communities should adopt policies and programs that address the needs of children and youth most at risk for crime or violence and reduce aggressive law enforcement tactics that stigmatize youth and marginalize their participation in schools and communities.

4.6.1 ACTION ITEM: Education and criminal justice agencies at all levels of government should work together to reform policies and procedures that push children into the juvenile justice system.⁸⁵

4.6.2 ACTION ITEM: In order to keep youth in school and to keep them from criminal and violent behavior, law enforcement agencies should work with schools to encourage the creation of alternatives to student suspensions and expulsion through restorative justice, diversion, counseling, and family interventions.

4.6.3 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should work with schools to encourage the use of alternative strategies that involve youth in decision making, such as restorative justice, youth courts, and peer interventions.

4.6.4 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should work with schools to adopt an instructional approach to discipline that uses interventions or disciplinary consequences to help students develop new behavior skills and positive strategies to avoid conflict, redirect energy, and refocus on learning.

4.6.5 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should work with schools to develop and monitor school discipline policies with input and collaboration from school personnel, students, families, and community members. These policies should prohibit the use of corporal punishment and electronic control devices.

4.6.6 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should work with schools to create a continuum of developmentally appropriate and proportional consequences for addressing ongoing and escalating student misbehavior after all appropriate interventions have been attempted.

4.6.7 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should work with communities to play a role in programs and procedures to reintegrate juveniles back into their communities as they leave the juvenile justice system.

4.6.8 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies and schools should establish memoranda of agreement for the placement of School Resource Officers that limit police involvement in student discipline.

4.6.9 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should assess and evaluate zero tolerance strategies and examine the role of reasonable discretion when dealing with adolescents in consideration of their stages of maturation or development.

4.7 RECOMMENDATION: Communities need to affirm and recognize the voices of youth in community decision making, facilitate youth-led research and problem solving, and develop and fund youth leadership training and life skills through positive youth/police collaboration and interactions.

4.7.1 ACTION ITEM: Communities and law enforcement agencies should restore and build trust between youth and police by creating programs and projects for positive, consistent, and persistent interaction between youth and police.

4.7.2 ACTION ITEM: Communities should develop community- and school-based evidence-based programs that mitigate punitive and authoritarian solutions to teen problems.

Pillar Five: Training & Education

5.1 RECOMMENDATION: The Federal Government should support the development of partnerships with training facilities across the country to promote consistent standards for high quality training and establish training innovation hubs.

5.1.1 ACTION ITEM: The training innovation hubs should develop replicable model programs that use adult-based learning and scenario based training in a training environment modeled less like boot camp. Through these programs the hubs would influence nationwide curricula, as well as instructional methodology.

5.1.2 ACTION ITEM: The training innovation hubs should establish partnerships with academic institutions to develop rigorous training practices, evaluation, and the development of curricula based on evidence-based practices.

5.1.3 ACTION ITEM: The Department of Justice should build a stronger relationship with the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement (IADLEST) in order to leverage their network with state boards and commissions of Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

5.2 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should engage community members in the

training process.

5.2.1 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should conduct research to develop and disseminate a toolkit on how law enforcement agencies and training programs can integrate community members into this training process.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should provide leadership training to all personnel throughout their careers.

5.3.1 ACTION ITEM: Recognizing that strong, capable leadership is required to create cultural transformation, the U.S. Department of Justice should invest in developing learning goals and model curricula/training for each level of leadership.

5.3.2 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should encourage and support partnerships between law enforcement and academic institutions to support a culture that values ongoing education and the integration of current research into the development of training, policies, and practices.

5.3.3 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should support and encourage cross-discipline leadership training.

5.4 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should develop, in partnership with institutions of higher education, a national postgraduate institute of policing for senior executives with a standardized curriculum preparing them to lead agencies in the 21st century.

5.5 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should instruct the Federal Bureau of Investigation to modify the curriculum of the National Academy at Quantico to include prominent coverage of the topical areas addressed in this report. In addition, the COPS Office and the Office of Justice Programs should work with law enforcement professional organizations to encourage modification of their curricula in a similar fashion.⁹⁵

5.6 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should make Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) a part of both basic recruit and in-service officer training.

5.6.1 ACTION ITEM: Because of the importance of this issue, Congress should appropriate funds to help support law enforcement crisis intervention training.

5.7 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should ensure that basic officer training includes lessons to improve social interaction as well as tactical skills.

5.8 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should ensure that basic recruit and in-service officer training include curriculum on the disease of addiction.

5.9 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should ensure both basic recruit and in-service training incorporates content around recognizing and confronting implicit bias and cultural responsiveness.

5.9.1 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should implement ongoing, top down training for all officers in cultural diversity and related topics that can build trust and legitimacy in diverse communities. This should be accomplished with the assistance of advocacy groups that represent the viewpoints of communities that have traditionally had adversarial relationships with law enforcement.

5.9.2 ACTION ITEM: Law enforcement agencies should implement training for officers that covers policies for interactions with the LGBTQ population, including issues such as determining gender identity for arrest placement, the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities, and immigrant or non-English speaking groups, as well as reinforcing policies for the prevention of sexual misconduct and harassment.

5.10 RECOMMENDATION: POSTs should require both basic recruit and in-service training on policing in a democratic society.

5.11 RECOMMENDATION: The Federal Government, as well as state and local agencies, should encourage and incentivize higher education for law enforcement officers.

5.11.1 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government should create a loan repayment and forgiveness

incentive program specifically for policing.

5.12 RECOMMENDATION: The Federal Government should support research into the development of technology that enhances scenario based training, social interaction skills, and enables the dissemination of interactive distance learning for law enforcement.

5.13 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should support the development and implementation of improved Field Training Officer programs.

5.13.1 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should support the development of broad Field Training Program standards and training strategies that address changing police culture and organizational procedural justice issues that agencies can adopt and customize to local needs.

5.13.2 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should provide funding to incentivize agencies to update their Field Training Programs in accordance with the new standards.

Pillar Six: Officer Wellness & Safety

6.1 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should enhance and further promote its multi-faceted officer safety and wellness initiative.

6.1.1 ACTION ITEM: Congress should establish and fund a national “Blue Alert” warning system.

6.1.2 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, should establish a task force to study mental health issues unique to officers and recommend tailored treatments.

6.1.3 ACTION ITEM: The Federal Government 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 ITEM: Pension plans should recognize fitness for duty examinations as definitive evidence of valid duty or non-duty related disability.

6.1.5 ACTION ITEM: Public Safety Officer Benefits (PSOB) should be provided to survivors of officers killed while working, regardless of whether the officer used safety equipment (seatbelt or anti-ballistic vest) or if officer death was the result of suicide attributed to a current diagnosis of duty-related mental illness, including but not limited to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

6.2 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should promote safety and wellness at every level of the organization.

6.2.1 ACTION ITEM: Though the Federal Government can support many of the programs and best practices identified by the U.S. Department of Justice initiative described in recommendation 6.1, the ultimate responsibility lies with each agency.

6.3 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should encourage and assist departments in the implementation of scientifically supported shift lengths by law enforcement.

6.3.1 ACTION ITEM: The U.S. Department of Justice should fund additional research into the efficacy of limiting the total number of hours an officer should work within a 24–48 hour period, including special findings on the maximum number of hours an officer should work in a high risk or high stress environment (e.g., public demonstrations or emergency situations).

6.4 RECOMMENDATION: Every law enforcement officer should be provided with individual tactical first aid kits and training as well as anti-ballistic vests.

6.4.1 ACTION ITEM: Congress should authorize funding for the distribution of law enforcement individual tactical first-aid kits.

6.4.2 ACTION ITEM: Congress should reauthorize and expand the Bulletproof Vest Partnership (BVP) program.

6.5 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should expand efforts to collect and analyze data not only on officer deaths but also on injuries and “near misses.”

6.6 RECOMMENDATION: Law enforcement agencies should adopt policies that require officers to wear seat belts and bullet-proof vests and provide training to raise awareness of the consequences of failure to do so.

6.7 RECOMMENDATION: Congress should develop and enact peer review error management legislation.

6.8 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Transportation should provide technical assistance opportunities for departments to explore the use of vehicles equipped with vehicle collision prevention “smart car” technology that will reduce the number of accidents.

Implementation

7.1 RECOMMENDATION: The President should direct all federal law enforcement agencies to review the recommendations made by the Task Force on 21st Century Policing and, to the extent practicable, to adopt those that can be implemented at the federal level.

7.2 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should explore public-private partnership opportunities, starting by convening a meeting with local, regional, and national foundations to discuss the proposals for reform described in this report and seeking their engagement and support in advancing implementation of these recommendations.

7.3 RECOMMENDATION: The U.S. Department of Justice should charge its Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) with assisting the law enforcement field in addressing current and future challenges.

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1. http://www.cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/Interim_TF_Report.pdf ?

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