

PUBLIC SAFETY BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

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PUBLIC SAFETY BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

Note: The AFL-CIO has 13 affiliate unions who represent law enforcement professionals. The AFL-CIO Task Force on Racial Justice convened a subcommittee on policing to provide a venue for union members in law enforcement, and their representatives, to develop recommendations on issues of public safety reform. The group expanded to include representatives from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), both of which represent law enforcement officers. This Public Safety Blueprint for Change is written by and from the perspective of unionized law enforcement officers and leaders, and endorsed by the participating unions and the AFL-CIO Task Force on Racial Justice.

The labor movement, as an integral part of our communities and the representative of many law enforcement officers, has a unique role to play in changing public safety. This Public Safety Blueprint for Change, based on our expertise, experience and aspirations, is our contribution to the public safety reform debate in America today. The fundamental goal of this blueprint is to build productive, positive and trusting community relationships, and to have the working professionals who provide public safety daily be a driving force for meaningful reforms grounded in equity, inclusion and racial justice.

There is no denying that our society is at a crossroads in the relationship between our communities and America's law enforcement. In the summer of 2020, after the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others at the hands of police, the simmering pot of tension with law enforcement and communities of color boiled over, leading to mass protests and marches across the country. Union members and our allies took to the streets to express the outrage and hurt that our communities have felt and experienced.

For far too long, people in positions of power—elected leaders and other decision-makers—stood idle while communities suffered under a system designed to benefit those with wealth and power at the expense of everyone else. By allowing this system to fester from our nation's conception, institutions that rely on community trust—such as America's police departments—became more and more disjointed from the communities they are charged with serving. This has been exacerbated by a culture in law enforcement that has discouraged the professionals doing the job

correctly every day from calling out their peers whose actions are a detriment to maintaining peace and safety, the profession and the community relationships needed for success. Systemic racism has been used throughout history as a tool by those in power to divide workers, leading to the “us vs. them” mentality that is dominating today's political and social unrest.

With union members experiencing these tensions in our nation firsthand, and the labor movement the single best vehicle for bringing police and community together, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, along with labor leaders from across the country, formed the AFL-CIO Task Force on Racial Justice.¹

As public safety reform efforts are being considered in states, cities and the U.S. Congress, a key voice is missing from the conversation—labor. The AFL-CIO has 13 affiliate unions who represent law enforcement professionals. The AFL-CIO Task Force on Racial Justice convened a subcommittee on policing to provide a venue for law enforcement worker perspectives on issues of public safety reform. Task Force Chair and United Steelworkers (USW) International Vice President Fred Redmond, along with AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, lead the subcommittee. The group expanded to include representatives from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), both of which represent law enforcement officers, to give labor a unified voice on this issue.

There is broad agreement among organized labor that meaningful public safety reforms are needed, and we

must re-imagine the construct and relationship that law enforcement has with the communities we serve. Public safety professionals, and our unions, have a duty to call out the wrong-doers and actions that harm people in our communities and, in doing so, the integrity of our profession. We can no longer stand idly by, or defend transgressors, when those who fail to uphold their oath and duty take actions that stain the work of law enforcement.

We must use our unions to advocate for meaningful reform that keeps communities and public safety professionals safe. All workers, including law enforcement officers, are entitled to a union and the right to bargain collectively. This is the cornerstone of the labor movement and a key American value that will play a critical role to advance meaningful reform.

This blueprint is a mechanism for true community engagement with public safety professionals. Effective and efficient public safety depends on securing the confidence, support and partnership of local communities, and engaging with those communities to develop and support initiatives that make for a safe and harmonious place to live for all people. Public safety agencies and communities should partner to solve problems and enhance quality of life in a manner that is fair, impartial, transparent and consistent.

To achieve these goals, we are focusing on understanding cultural impacts, as well as implicit, conscious and unconscious biases, accepting that all community interactions contribute to law enforcement's "legitimacy in the eyes of the public that [they] are sworn to protect." As members of the community, we must respect and promote all forms of diversity while advocating for services and resources needed for our neighbors and all those touched by the criminal justice system. If we wish to benefit from the highest degree of trust, confidence, support and participation from our communities, we must always serve with honesty and integrity and adhere to the highest standard of professional conduct and compassion. America is a diverse society and the labor movement is a reflection of that diversity. Additionally, we must do everything in our power to dismantle the systemic racism that has plagued our nation since its birth.

We are servants of America's founding principles, which include that all people are created equal, and

we seek allegiance with every individual, leader and organization wanting to make change. We welcome all to walk with us on this journey of discovering a new vision of implementing public safety for all.

Union Law Enforcement Accountability and Duty Standards (U-LEADS) Program

With this blueprint, union law enforcement officers and leaders have developed the Union Law Enforcement Accountability and Duty Standards (U-LEADS) program, a mechanism independent of management to effectively deal with members who have continually violated their oath of office and our relationships with the communities we serve. Often times when incidents involving law enforcement make headlines, police union leaders are asked to provide statements and weigh in on the actions of officers. When these incidents involve officers who have not upheld their duty, police unions are blamed for defending the indefensible. Police unions have been accused of blocking reform efforts that increase officers' accountability for their actions. A 2020 Gallup poll showed 56% of respondents thought police unions should be eliminated.²

The labor movement recognizes the lack of mechanisms for local unions to hold wrong-doers accountable and protect the profession that has contributed to the public's poor view of police unions and tarnished the reputation of the profession. As law enforcement professional Booker Hodges pointed out:

"We are to blame for this in part because unlike other unions, we very seldom admit when one of us makes a mistake. An occasional reminder to the public regarding the legal obligation of unions to defend their members and admitting when we make a mistake could go a long way toward improving neighborhood relations....A union is required to represent an officer, but in cases where someone has clearly violated our oath of office, publicly defending an officer who has clearly violated our oath of office strains neighborhood relations and erodes trust."³

Decisions on pre-employment standards, background checks, training and hiring are made at the sole discretion of the employer, and it is the union's responsibility through collective bargaining to ensure due process and fair treatment.

And while we support the creation, and maintenance, of a national database of officers who are fired or resign in lieu of termination under investigation of misconduct, the labor movement is also taking the initiative to look in the mirror.

By implementing the U-LEADS program, we can set clear standards for excellence, raise the bar of policing in America and hold members accountable to our core values.

Recommendations:

- National and local unions that represent law enforcement officers should adopt the U-LEADS program.
- Labor should work with existing infrastructure, such as AFL-CIO state federations and central labor councils, to engage in community dialogue and implement recommendations.

The U-LEADS program is independent of any management or disciplinary process. The program is developed, owned and instituted by the union. The aim of the program is to hold members accountable to an agreed-upon set of commitments and our core union values. U-LEADS will empower local union members to speak up and take action if fellow members are violating their professional oath or abusing their power, and ultimately helps the union weed out wrong-doers from union membership. By taking these actions, unions will be able to speak with authority on how we rebuild public trust and credibility.

It starts with a commitment from union leadership. When a local union adopts the U-LEADS program, it provides training for all members about the expectations and opportunities that align with implementation. U-LEADS designees receive a specific training that enables them to carry out the program on the job. These designees are the critical link between the members and union leadership. Once the program is implemented, ongoing awareness and communication is a core component of keeping the values of U-LEADS at the forefront of each workday. The U-LEADS program is designed to ensure the highest standards at every local we represent. Leaders and members commit to demonstrating the labor movement’s core values in everything we do. National and local unions who commit to U-LEADS do so because we possess

the power to forge real change in our communities. It is through this program police unions will break through the blue wall of silence wherever it exists, holding wrong-doers accountable and protecting the profession for those who serve with honor every day.

Reimagining Public Safety—The Differential Response Model

We hear the calls coming from communities across the United States to abolish or defund the police. And we hear demands for reforms and stronger accountability in the wake of unarmed people losing their lives in interactions with law enforcement. While we do not believe that defunding or abolishing the police is a solution, it is clear we must make changes in law enforcement to build a sense of mutual respect, trust and accountability.

And together with our allies, we must advocate for investment in our communities to ensure every person has what they need to be safe and thrive. The communities we serve have suffered under historic public policies like redlining, segregation, and the exclusion of Black people and other people of color from programs that create a path to the middle class.⁴ We are fully aware how lack of investment in low-income communities and communities of color have resulted in a lack of opportunity, increased hopelessness and cycles of violence that we must work together to overcome if America is truly going to live up to its promise. In addition, laws that simply serve as revenue generators, penalizing communities of color for minor infractions, should be reformed. They are not only wrong, but police officers unwillingly have become the face of these policies. And finally, we know firsthand that the nation’s mental health crisis has gone unaddressed for far too long, placing law enforcement officers and communities in harm’s way and failing those who struggle from invisible wounds and have either no or inadequate access to proper treatment in our health care system.

The way to improve public safety systems and services actually requires greater investment. This is no different than many other “basic” government services, including education, water, sewer and roads. For example, when a contaminated water system is discovered, there are calls for accountability to the

public. But those public outcries nearly always include a demand for increased investment to fix the system. People need and expect the government to provide clean, safe water. People also need and expect the government to provide just public safety. Federal, state and local governments should focus on implementing the best model for the provision of safety for all.

One way to restructure public safety is through a differential response model, which brings law enforcement together with non-police resources. The concept of differential response is not new, with policing and criminal justice literature having analyzed it, in some form or another, for decades. In the early 1980s, the National Institute of Justice designed inquiries to examine whether individuals who needed public safety services were satisfied with various alternatives to response by a police officer, finding that “[m]ore than 90 percent of callers in...three cities who received the alternative responses were satisfied with them.”⁵

Today, police “[o]fficers spend their time responding to pressing problems” that go beyond enforcing laws or fighting crime—“overdoses, homelessness, and mental-health crises, to name a few.”⁶ Officers must “[p]ick up the pieces of what society has failed at solving,” as “when no one else can help, we call the cops and ask them to do something.”⁷ There is a need for large investments to create a civilian corps of unarmed first responders such as social workers, EMTs and trained mental health professionals who can work in partnership with police officers and handle nonviolent emergencies, including those involving mental health and low-level conflicts outside the criminal justice system. These partnerships can work to de-escalate interactions with the public and, when appropriate, divert individuals to the social services they need.

As more jurisdictions recognize that “true public safety requires communities and police departments to work together to coproduce it,”⁸ says the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, there has been renewed attention to mechanisms for ensuring that law enforcement and communities both actively contribute to community well-being and safety—rather than forcing officers to solely address a myriad of social issues without proper support, training or expertise.

The adoption of a formalized differential response model will provide law enforcement agencies with more time to engage in community and problem-oriented policing, with a focus on the core mission of public safety and crime prevention. It also will help balance the level of policing to community expectations, reducing complaints of over-policing. Stakeholder groups suggest that at least some community members believe that police presence is too high, or that the response of police departments to lower-level “quality of life” concerns is unnecessary, undesirable or even harmful. A differential response approach may help target the services that communities demand and police agencies provide while giving those agencies, alongside non-law enforcement partners, more opportunities to engage with the community in a nonenforcement capacity.

Recommendations:

- Law enforcement agencies and our unions should engage in a community-driven, collaborative process to formulate a new vision for public safety. Forward-thinking approaches in policing emphasize the primacy of community participation.⁹ This approach, according to the Leadership Conference, can ensure a system of public safety is created that keeps communities and police safe, particularly in underserved communities.

“The community’s voice should inform all aspects of department operations, from how departments are structured to how officers use their time. Department leaders should seek community members’ concerns and desires when devising policing strategies, and community members should be able to provide input when policies are created and revised....Departments that seek community voice enhance police legitimacy and strengthen democracy. Many cities are experimenting with models that amplify community perspectives on police operations.”¹⁰

- Law enforcement agencies, working with our unions, should expressly develop a comprehensive, differential response model focusing on implementation of the most effective strategies to handle emergency and service calls from the community. Every jurisdiction has an opportunity to implement a coordinated differential response model to address public safety issues:

Differential police response (DPR) strategies involve efforts to systematically differentiate among requests for police service in terms of the forms of police response that are optimal. DPR strategies provide for a wider range of response options than the traditional one of dispatching patrol officers as quickly as possible.¹¹

Many departments say they operate under a differential response model.¹² However, true differential response is far more than the standard triaging and prioritization of calls for service that must occur at the point of dispatch.

Instead, forward-looking differential response focuses on matching the best and most appropriate public service response to the situation at hand. It focuses police resources on responding to situations where law enforcement expertise and training is most applicable, while dispatching other resources when those are best tailored to the situation.

Functionally, a differential response model would formalize, in advance, an understanding about what government function has the primary responsibility for various community issues. For instance, when dispatchers receive a call expressing concerns about a community member's state of mind, it may be that mental health professionals are best situated to take the lead on response, with police providing backup support at the scene to ensure the safety of both the subject and mental health professional. Reports of lost or missing property may be routed to specific, non-police personnel for triage, with police becoming involved if or when a formal report needs to be filed. Meanwhile, more urgent calls involving crimes in progress or threats of violence would receive an immediate police response.

The adoption of a true differential response model would require, among other things, a much tighter and more seamless integration of the various government agencies and services that relate to public safety: policing, emergency response, fire, mental health and more. Although some of these services already fall within the law enforcement agency umbrella, others do not. So structural, organizational changes would likely be an important first step in implementing a differential response approach. Pursuant to such organizational changes, a rich, cross-functional stakeholder

collaborative, including public safety agencies, labor partners and community organizations, would need to address, in detail, the protocols and practices for matching the best response resources to particular types and classes of calls for service. Community and front-line officer input on the design of these response systems is paramount.

Recruitment, Retention, Officer Wellness and Early Intervention Systems

Effective recruitment, hiring and retention is a critical component of constitutional policing, organizational efficiency and positive police–community relations, regardless of the size of the organization.¹³ Building trust and legitimacy in any organization and community starts with the cadre of officers hired and retained by the agency. Public safety unions have a vested interest in the recruitment process and the production of quality public safety professionals.

Increasingly, law enforcement agencies are working to address the needs of their communities, according to International Association of Chiefs of Police Dwayne Orrick, by focusing on attracting qualified officers and retaining those who possess skills, attributes and life experiences that are consistent with those of the community that they will serve.¹⁴ Accordingly, recruiting should be focused on creating a positive agency culture that is driven by the principles of community-based, fair and impartial policing. As President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing has observed:

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.¹⁵

Diversity also is considered a key ingredient for the successful implementation of the type of community-based policing.¹⁶ Police will be seen as more legitimate and may be better able to partner with community organizations in fighting crime if they more closely resemble and identify with the communities they serve.¹⁷

According to the Department of Justice, agencies thrive when they:

- Recruit and hire talented personnel who reflect the community's diversity.
- Retain talent by providing incentive structures, mentorship and transparent organizational justice.

Law enforcement agencies and elected leaders, working together with our public safety unions, should create and implement a strategic plan for recruitment, hiring and retention to ensure they attract well-qualified, diverse recruits familiar with policing in a challenging environment and retain these officers so communities benefit from the long-term relationships formed between officers and residents.

Recommendations:

- Agencies, working with our unions, should formulate a comprehensive professional development program, including opportunities for leadership training, educational opportunities, and cross-training programs with neighboring jurisdictions and other city departments.
- Agencies should work with us to explore changes in officer compensation that both ensures market competitiveness for the very best recruits and continues workforce development through stimulation of positive workplace traits, skill development and behaviors.
- Agencies should explore mechanisms that more effectively balance the burdensome lengthy hiring process with the need for full scope screening.

In today's competitive job market, streamlined and highly efficient application and hiring processes are critical for success. Many potential job applicants are unable to wait for a police recruiting process that takes several months to complete.¹⁸ Additionally, hiring processes should become more transparent and avoid discouraging today's information hungry job seekers with processes that are overly difficult to navigate.

Recommendations:

- Agencies, working with our unions, should explore whether minimum hiring qualifications and/or disqualifying characteristics should be modified (such as whether officers should be required to

live in a particular geographical area or removing prohibitions on beards and tattoos).

- Agencies should ensure that recruitment and retention is a constant year-round effort, with sufficient resources allocated for activities and marketing initiatives to build and maintain the strongest possible force.

Law enforcement agencies "can foster intrinsic motivation [necessary for retention] by allowing employees to pursue their interests, capitalize on their strengths, and have input into decision-making within the agency,"¹⁹ according to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. This requires creating a new culture of employee engagement, training and listening that establishes a robust feedback loop across all command levels, while also promoting employee satisfaction and eliminating the stigma surrounding peer reporting of unacceptable behavior. Identifying mechanisms to constantly recognize and reward good decision-making among officers through recognition awards, alerting senior leadership to officers' positive conduct, and promoting roll-call shoutouts and informal recognition from senior leaders²⁰ can also boost morale and heighten officer job satisfaction.

Recommendations:

- Law enforcement agencies, working with our unions, should implement meaningful, nondisciplinary early intervention systems aimed at identifying potentially problematic performance in advance—allowing the agencies to provide opportunities for professional development and skill-building necessary to get things back on the right track.
- Agencies, working with our unions, should ensure ongoing, meaningful opportunities for officers to interact with command staff and senior leadership.
 - Agencies should ensure that line officers have ongoing, meaningful opportunities to interact directly with the chief and senior command, especially after high-profile incidents and during times of heightened activity.
 - In the same manner that new or updated policies should be the subject of community participation and collaboration, individual officers should be able to meaningfully participate in the policy development process.

- Unions should adopt an accountability program such as the U-LEADS program.

Policing is a dangerous, unpredictable and stressful profession. Officers are expected to respond to the scene of tense situations and resolve conflicts in which people are at their worst or most vulnerable. They often are called to address aspects of humanity that the remainder of the social service fabric has forgotten or left behind.

As a result of performing their everyday duties, police officers can face unique physical and mental stress.²¹ As a professional group, officers have a disproportionately high suicide rate. In 2016, more officers died of suicide than any single cause of death in the line of duty (and almost as many as all causes combined).²² Officers also exhibit symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at a higher rate than the general population.²³

This ongoing stress also affects officers' spouses, children and families—as well as communities we serve. Mental and physical health challenges can and often do result in increased administrative costs from absenteeism, increased use of workers' compensation and sick leave, and an uptick in early retirement. Likewise, according to the Police Executive Research Forum, “[w]hen exhausted, officers are unable to effectively communicate with community members and may even incite agitation among them.”²⁴ “Officers who are equipped to handle stress at work and at home...are more likely to make better decisions on the job and have positive interactions with community members,”²⁵ observes the Leadership Conference.

Given the importance of officer wellness, President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing has recommended:

Support for wellness and safety should permeate all practices and be expressed through changes in procedures, requirements, attitudes, and behaviors. An agency work environment in which officers do not feel they are respected, supported, or treated fairly is one of the most common sources of stress. And research indicates that officers who feel respected by their supervisors are more likely to accept and voluntarily comply with departmental

policies. This transformation should also overturn the tradition of silence on psychological problems, encouraging officers to seek help without concern about negative consequences.²⁶

Officer wellness can be supported through a variety of mechanisms within a law enforcement agency, according to the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services:

There is clearly a continuum of mental health and wellness strategies, programs...that begins with recruitment and hiring and goes through retirement. It includes proactive prevention and resiliency building; early interventions; critical incident response; treatment, reintegration; and ongoing support for officers, staff members, and their families.²⁷

Good management and leadership are essential ingredients to improving morale, wellness and culture in any institution. This includes raising awareness of, and investment in, wellness initiatives, both physical and mental; increasing access to professional training; and providing accessibility to supportive leadership, mentoring, and feedback.²⁸

This type of investment in improving internal culture provides the opportunity to save police agencies money. It is also the bedrock of community-responsive public safety services. As Tracey Meares, the Walton Hale Hamilton professor of law and founding director of the Justice Collaboratory at Yale Law School and a member of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, has observed, “Hurt people can hurt people.”²⁹ A police force with officers who have poor physical and psychological health provides less benefit to the community; and these officers can be a danger to themselves, their peers and those they are sworn to serve.

Recommendations:

Law enforcement agencies, working with our unions and community partners, should implement a comprehensive, 360-degree officer wellness program.

- Agencies, working with our unions, should establish a program with protocols to assist officers who have responded to high-stress calls, providing both

mandatory and voluntary opportunities for officers to be matched with mental health services.

- Agencies should provide annual non-disciplinary personal assessments that include reminders about available mental health and support services.
- Agencies, working with our unions, should support the implementation of a robust, structured peer support network.
- Agencies, working with our unions, should implement long-term mentoring programs that match officers with qualified senior personnel from the time they are in the police academy.
- Agencies and our unions should ensure that existing support services, like Employee Assistance Programs, are of superior quality and utilized more. The stigma of needing assistance is a barrier to officers seeking professional services. Agencies should ensure and communicate to officers that these programs are absolutely confidential and will not be used in any adverse employment actions.
- Agencies should work with our unions toward the provision of scheduled time during work hours for mental, physical and emotional wellness, especially at the beginning or ends of shifts.
- Agencies should provide enhanced mechanisms for officers to provide feedback about their experiences, such as regular employee satisfaction surveys and thorough exit interviews.

National Training and Education Standards

Law enforcement officers are trained and skilled in tactics to varying degrees. However, policing in the 21st century requires them to develop knowledge, skills and an understanding that enable them to meet the various challenges they will face and the expectations of those they serve. As recent events have certainly revealed, tactical skills are important, but an officer's demeanor and interpersonal skills are equally, and at times more, important in effective, efficient and procedurally just policing practices. It is these qualities that determine if an officer is viewed by those they serve as simply an agent of the government or a vital part of the community. There are some 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States, all having their own autonomous standards. Significant efforts need to be made to construct

basic national standards that are portable for every jurisdiction.

Recommendations:

- Law enforcement agencies, officers and elected officials, working with our unions, should have input in developing learning goals and model curricula/training for each level of police leadership. To be effective and current, this training must be a permanent continuing structure throughout every officer's career.
- Such training should focus on organizational procedural justice, community policing, police accountability, teaching, coaching, mentoring, and communicating with the media and the public.

Standards and programs need to be established for every level of leadership, from the first line to middle management to top executives. If there is good leadership and procedural justice within the agency, officers are more likely to behave according to those standards in the community. One example of leadership training is Leadership in Police Organizations (LPO), a program modeled after the West Point Leadership Program. LPO offers training for all levels of agency management in programs based on a behavioral science approach, focusing on the concept that "every officer is a leader."

Recommendations:

- Law enforcement agencies and training centers, working with our unions, should engage in partnerships with academic institutions to support a culture that values ongoing education and the integration of current research into the development of best policies and practices.
- Basic officer and in-service training must include coursework in social interaction as well as tactical skills.
- Training must include topics such as implicit bias, systemic racism, fair and impartial policing, competency in cultural differences, and other areas that help build trust and legitimacy in diverse communities and offer solutions for gaining compliance without the use of force.
- Basic recruit and in-service training must include tactical and operations training on lethal and nonlethal use of force with an emphasis on de-escalation and tactical retreat skills.

- Basic recruit and in-service training must include instruction on the disease of addiction, the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing says in its report:

“It is important that officers be able to recognize the signs of addiction and respond accordingly when they are interacting with people who may be impaired as a result of their addiction. Science has demonstrated that addiction is a disease of the brain—a disease that can be prevented and treated and from which people can recover.”³⁰

- Government agencies should collaborate to produce options for law enforcement to divert people suffering from mental illness, drug and alcohol addiction away from jail and toward treatment.³¹

Our country is diverse, and it is increasingly important that police officers be conscious, aware and tolerant of people’s differences. It is vital that law enforcement training mechanisms provide continuing education that recognizes the unique needs and characteristics of different communities and individuals, whether they are witnesses or victims of crime, subjects of stops, or criminal suspects.

Recommendation:

- Basic recruit and in-service training should include content centered on cultural diversity and awareness.

Law enforcement training, policy and practice has been slow to adapt to cultural and racial divisions. This reality severely disadvantages line officers and police standing in general. Research has shown that people’s experience of police interactions is not universal. For instance, according to a 2011 report produced by the Department of Justice, “of those involved in traffic and street stops, a smaller percentage of Blacks than Whites believed the police behaved properly during the stop.”³² In a 2012 survey of LGBTQ+ people who had recent contact with police, 25% of respondents believed they experienced at least one type of misconduct or harassment.³³

Recommendations:

- Officers should receive training that covers policies for how to interact with people experiencing mental

health crisis, the autistic (and spectrum) community, the LGBTQ+ population (including issues such as determining gender identity for arrest placement), Muslim and other diverse religious communities, and immigrant or non-English speaking groups.

- Policies focused on the prevention of sexual misconduct and harassment by officers must be reinforced.
- Basic recruit and in-service training must include instruction on policing in a democratic society.

Police have a significant amount of authority. Accordingly, it is essential they receive training on the constitutional basis of and the proper use of the power they are granted. Particular focus should be placed on ensuring that stops based on reasonable suspicion, known as “Terry stops,”³⁴ are conducted in a fair and constitutional way.

Additionally, in a recent article in *The Conversation US*, professor Leana Bouffard (chair of the Department of Sociology, Iowa State University) and Director Gaylene Armstrong (School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Nebraska Omaha) documented several advantages of officers having college degrees.³⁵

Recommendation:

- Law enforcement agencies, working with our unions, should encourage and incentivize higher education for law enforcement officers, as recommended by the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing:

Many believe that a higher level of required education could raise the quality of officer performance, yet law enforcement also benefits from a diverse range of officers who bring their cultures, languages, and life experiences to policing. Offering entry level opportunities to recruits without a college degree can be combined with the provision of means to obtain higher education throughout their career, thereby ensuring the benefits of a diverse staff with a well-educated police force and an active learning culture. Current student loan programs allow repayment based on income, and some already provide tuition debt forgiveness after 120 months of service in the government or nonprofit sector.³⁶

Conclusion

We are the leaders who have pledged to “serve and protect” the community, and it is our responsibility to be a part of transforming policing to become what communities and those who work in law enforcement need to thrive and be safe. Our experiences and expertise in shaping public safety for the 21st century is vital to a transformation that is successful and sustaining.

Finally, we are well aware that law enforcement professionals and community leaders and members must come together to reconstruct the basic contract that allows law enforcement officers to do our job with more transparency, accountability within the profession, and the funding needed to keep the community and ourselves safe.

Endnotes

- 1 AFL-CIO Creates New Task Force on Racial Justice—press release, July 10, 2020, available at aflcio.org/press/releases/afl-cio-creates-new-task-force-racial-justice.
- 2 Crabtree, Steve, “Most Americans Say Policing Needs ‘Major Changes’” Gallup, July 22, 2020, available at news.gallup.com/poll/315962/americans-say-policing-needs-major-changes.aspx.
- 3 Hodges, Booker, “What Police Unions Do (and Why It Matters),” *Police1*, April 2, 2018, available at police1.com/legal/articles/what-police-unions-do-and-why-it-matters-Dl1MptG2fXOZZAmH.
- 4 See, e.g., the labor movement acknowledges the historical disparate systemic effects that public policies have had on our society. For example, in 1869 Congress passed the 15th Amendment giving African American men the constitutional right to vote. It wasn’t until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that the federal government ensured the legal right to vote for African American women, and even still today obstacles remain for communities of color to have equal access to voting.

Similarly the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), passed in 1935, is historically viewed as the labor movement’s most substantial legislative victory, but in many states employers were legally allowed to discriminate against employees based on race until the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

And the Minimum Wage Act, while on its face appears as a win for all workers, was used at the time of its inception to price Black workers out of the labor market while creating a “White preference” in certain economic sectors like the railroad industry.
- 5 Kennedy, David M., “The Strategic Management of Police Resources,” U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, National Institute of Justice, *Perspectives on Policing* 3 (1993).
- 6 Staff op-ed, The Philadelphia Inquirer, “Are We Asking Police to Do Too Much? 7 Experts Debate the Role Cops Should Play in Today’s Society,” Feb. 28, 2019, available at inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/role-of-police-law-enforcement-expert-opinion-20190228.html.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, *New Era for Public Safety: A Guide to Fair Safe and Effective Community Policing* 22 (2019).
- 9 See, e.g., Friedman, Barry, *Unwarranted: Policing Without Permission* (2017); Tracey Meares, “Policing and Procedural Justice: Shaping Citizens’ Identities to Increase Democratic Participation,” 111 *Northwestern University Law Review* 1525 (2017); Imani J. Jackson and Frank LoMonte, “Policing Transparency,” *Human Rights* (Jan. 7, 2020).
- 10 Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, *New Era for Public Safety: A Guide to Fair Safe and Effective Community Policing* 22 (2019).
- 11 Worden, Robert E., “Toward Equity and Efficiency in Law Enforcement: Differential Police Response,” 12 *American Journal of Police* 1, 1 (1993).
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