

**Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice**

**Reduction of Crime Hearing: National and Local Perspectives**

**April 7, 2020**

Operator: Good day and welcome to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice conference call. At this time I'd like to turn the conference over to Director Phil Keith. Please go ahead sir.

Phil Keith: Thank you, good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. I'll call the President's Commission for Law Enforcement Administration of Justice to order. On behalf of Attorney General Barr we thank you for joining us today for this important commission teleconference meeting. I hope everyone had a healthy and safe weekend also ((inaudible)). Okay we'll try that again. I hope everyone had a healthy and safe weekend and I also appreciate your continued patience and understanding as we continue the business of the President's Commission as we have moved from traditional face to face commission sessions to one of teleconferencing. The witnesses and commissioners are transitioning extremely well in particular with the support of our federal program management staff.

Our collective work is important as our final product will go up to the Attorney General, the President and Congress that will have a lasting impact on the criminal justice system especially the safety and wellness of the men and women of law enforcement. The challenges of the commission pale in comparison to those that on the front lines are facing challenges each and every day. And that's why we're here why we're tackling very challenging issues and why we work to do so important omission to the welfare of the first responders, our communities and our collective future. Vice Chairman Sullivan and I certainly want to express our appreciation and of your continued willingness and understanding as we navigate the challenges of facilitating the work of the commission. We extend a great deal of gratitude for the incredible work for our 15 working groups, the chairs, the staff and the commissioners who are also participating with those working groups.

At this time I would ask the Executive Director, Dean Kueter to conduct the roll call of commissioners.

Dean Kueter: Thank you Mr. Chairman. Before I get started with the roll call I just want to remind everybody on the line that today's event is open to the press and for members of the media that are on the phone call if you have questions or need clarification on anything please contact Kristina Mastropasqua in DOJ's Public Affairs Office. And with that I will start with the roll. Commissioner Bowdich?

David Bowdich: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Clemmons?

James Clemmons: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Evans? Commissioner Frazier? Commissioner Gaultieri?

Robert Gaultieri: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Hawkins?

Gina Hawkins: Present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Lombardo?

Regina Lombardo: Here Dean.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner McDonald?

Erica MacDonald: Present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Moody?

Ashley Moody: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Parr?

Nancy Parr: Here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Price?

Craig Price: Good afternoon, I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Ramsay?

Gordon Ramsay: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Rausch?

David Rausch: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Samaniego?

John Samaniego: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Smallwood?

James Smallwood: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Vice Chair Sullivan?

Katie Sullivan: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: And Commissioner Washington?

Donald Washington: Here.

Dean Kueter: Mr. Chairman that concludes the roll call.

Phil Keith: Thank you Dean. Any other announcements today Dean?

Dean Kueter: No sir. We're good to go.

Phil Keith: Thank you. Our focus for the next few weeks will be on crime reduction. We'll be hearing today from key leaders in the field as they present us both a national and local perspective. All commissioners should have received the agendas and bios for this week. We appreciate your patience as we continue adjusting and enhancing our processes. As noted on previous commission calls we encourage commissioners to take notes during the panels and we'll open to questions at the end of the testimony.

Our first distinguished witness is Amy Blasher. She's the Chief of the Crime Statistics Management Unit at the FBI. Chief Blasher, thank you for joining us today here at the commission. You are now recognized.

Amy Blasher: Good afternoon. I'd like to thank the commission for allowing me the opportunity to present this important topic today. As you mentioned I am Amy Blasher, and I'm the Unit Chief of the FBI's Crime Statistic Management Unit which manages the Uniform Crime Reporting Program often referred to as UCR. My testimony today will focus on the national trends of violent crime as reported to the FBI for the past several years. Historically there have been known factors that contribute to levels of crime including population density, youth concentration, economic conditions, cultural, educational, recreational factors, family conditions, climate, effective strength of law enforcement agencies and citizens' attitude towards crime and reporting to law enforcement.

Based on the complexities involved the FBI makes no attempt to interpret the data. Instead we defer to noted criminologists and sociologists who have analyzed crime trends in greater depth by incorporating all of these factors. At this time I'd like to discuss the two slides that were sent to you depicting the national violent crime trends and comparisons of offenses and percentages.

I'll start with the first slide, the estimated violent crime offenses from 2009 to 2018. The UCR program collects statistical information from law enforcement agencies across the nation on a voluntary basis. Based on reports from law enforcement agencies the FBI is able to calculate estimates of both violent and property crime. Two-thousand-nine to 2013 the estimated number of violent crimes continued to decline while the brief increase occurred over the years 2015 to 2017. Annual data from 2018 indicated that there was a decrease in violent crime. Based on preliminary data from the first six months of 2019 the 3.1% decrease indicates that this trend may be holding for the near term. Law enforcement data from areas making up the nation's urban centers and suburban communities follow a similar trend to the rest of the nation with an overall decrease of nearly 5% in the past ten years.

You'll see from the second slide the five year comparison of violent crime offense percentages. But in addition to the overall trends the violent crime title was comprised of the individual offenses of murder or non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. The relative

frequency of each of these four offenses has been comparatively stable over the past five years. Despite the overall decrease in violent crime, reports have indicated small proportional increases in rape and aggravated assault since 2017.

In closing, the FBI recommends that the nation's law enforcement agencies fully support a transition to the National Incident-Based Reporting System or NIBRS to improve understanding violent crime, its characteristics and create a framework for better assessment of crime reduction strategies. The FBI is working vigorously with law enforcement agencies nationwide to help them transition to incident based reporting. In fact the FBI will support a national law enforcement organization has established January 1, 2021 as the goal for all UCR contributors this event ((inaudible)) NIBRS. At that time the FBI will retire the historic unified crime reporting system otherwise known as UCR in favor of the more detailed data collection. After full transition of the UCR program to the NIBRS in 2021 the nation will be better poised to monitor trends and patterns related to violent crime to include additional violent offenses of kidnapping and human trafficking due to an expanded number of offense types captured in NIBRS.

In addition characteristics of violent crime such as weapons associated with the offense and injuries to victims will also be available to further understand and explore aspects of violent crime that impact our communities. To obtain additional information on the FBI's UCR program I would encourage you to visit [fbi.gov](http://fbi.gov) or our web site that has all the information, all the publications, historical publications and more information on this move to NIBRS in January 1, 2021. With that I present back to the commission.

Phil Keith: Thank you so much for your valued testimony Chief Blasher. Our next witness is distinguished US Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio, Mr. Justin Herdman. Thank you for joining us today Mr. Herdman. You're now recognized.

Justin Herdman: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you to the commissioners for the opportunity to testify here today on this vital issue of violent crime impact, this has on our nation, states and local communities. My name again is Justin Herdman and I am United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio and I'm honored to speak here today not only on behalf of the Northern District of Ohio and our nearly 6 million residents but also on behalf of my 92 US attorney colleagues stretching from Maine to Guam. Your nation's US attorneys are committed to carrying out President Trump's executive order to reduce crime and restore public safety in America. And we believe that our President and Attorney General Barr have made unprecedented strides in providing us with the tools to do just that, reduce crime and restore public safety. We've have seen outstanding progress in many areas only some of which I will highlight today but there is still much work to do.

Now on the federal side we are often asked what role we can play in driving violent crime numbers down. After all these are crimes that stem from a host of socioeconomic ills and many of those problems do not fall squarely in the core competency of the federal government let alone federal prosecutors. And this leads to my first recommendation, constructive comprehensive, community partnerships convened at the federal level and focused on violent crime prevention. Our department-wide violent crime reduction program Project Safe Neighborhoods, has asked US attorneys to address the prevention side of violent crime by focusing on partnerships with local leaders and community organizations. In Cleveland we leverage our local partnerships through our community collaborative effort known as STANCE, which stands for Stand Together Against Neighborhood Crime Every Day. That group brings together law-enforcement, youth counselors, healthcare professionals, academics and community organizations to focus on reducing firearms violence amongst Cleveland's young people. Instead of concentrating purely on enforcement, the group has addressed violent crime through expanded opportunity for youth particularly over the summer months and out of school hours by working with the office of Cleveland's Mayor, Frank Jackson who has made the issue of youth violence one of his signature efforts. Indeed the issue of youth re-entry from juvenile facilities is the 2020 focus for our STANCE group.

My second recommendation is continued and committed prioritization of federal firearms prosecutions especially using under-enforced statutes. For years federal prosecution has centered on felons in possession of firearms and individuals who possess firearms in connection with a crime of violence or a drug trafficking offense. To these two more traditional areas of federal firearms enforcement I would add one more that has seen increased tension under the leadership of Attorney General Barr.

Federal law also prohibits someone convicted of domestic violence misdemeanor or is subject to a protection order related to domestic violence from having a gun. The presence of firearms in a domestic abuse setting makes it far more likely that the victim of domestic violence will be murdered or that police officers responding to domestic violence call will be killed. And for far too long the prosecution of these domestic violence related firearms cases has been underemphasized by federal law enforcement. That tide is turning though.

My United States attorney colleagues are incorporating these domestic violence prosecutions into our local crime reduction strategies and last year Attorney General Barr created the first ever domestic violence working group. The importance of federal firearms prosecutions has received renewed attention with another signature initiative of Attorney General Barr, Project Guardian. I know that this will be covered by other witnesses but I'll refer to it here because it demonstrates the centrality of federal firearms statutes to our department-wide push to reduce violent crime. And a particular area of emphasis on the Project Guardian is our federal prosecution of straw purchasers. Straw purchases put guns in the hands of prohibited violent criminals and are therefore a priority for federal prosecution. Federal firearms prosecutions can deliver immediate impact on violent crime in our communities. As an example I would offer the success we saw in Youngstown over the course of 2019.

In both 2017 and 2018 Youngstown experienced 28 homicides per year and that was an increase from the years that preceded it. The 2018 numbers were particularly troubling because they



included eight murders that occurred in less than one month including a triple homicide in November of 2018 where a 3-month-old infant was one of the victims.

As a result of this disturbing trend in January 2019 Youngstown Police Chief Robin Lees and I convened a meeting at the US Attorney's Office to which we invited all of our local, state and federal partners in the area. From that meeting a strategy was developed by the Youngstown Police Department for focused and targeted firearms interdiction associated with particular problem areas in the city.

In two separate initiatives Operation Steel Penguin which focused on spring and early summer and Operation Rookery which focused on late summer and early fall the joint federal state and local team efforts led to 109 arrests, 45 firearms removed from the streets and 18 federal indictments. Most importantly during the two phases of the operation violent crime was reduced by 30% overall and homicides were down nearly 90% when compared to the same time periods in 2018. Youngstown finished 2019 near a 40 year low in homicide numbers.

My third recommendation, prosecution of drug trafficking organizations in order to reduce violent crime. When asked about the overlap between drug offenses and violent crime I often point out that all narcotics trafficking relies on cash and drugs. Consequently, narcotics traffickers rely on firearms to protect themselves, their cash and their drugs. As a result it's no surprise to see violent crime linked to drug trafficking. In short there is no such thing as a non-violent drug offense.

One example of multi-agency commitment to reduce both drug trafficking and violent crimes is Operation Hadley's Hope which focused on the city of Mansfield located about an hour south of Cleveland. This multiyear investigation led by the Cleveland FBI included the use of multiple federal wiretaps and resulted in three large coordinated takedowns of drug trafficking organizations in October of 2017, February of 2019 and March 2020. This investigation resulted in the seizure of 51 firearms and the arrest of 145 individuals. And most importantly violent crime was reduced by

19% in 2018 following the first takedown and a further 6.2% decrease in 2019 following the second takedown.

My fourth recommendation, federal state and local partnerships intensely focused on law enforcement operations in a designated and confined geographical area. As an example I would point the panel to operation We R CLE which was the US Marshals led effort focused on violent fugitive apprehension on the east side of Cleveland in the spring of 2018. This operation saw 175% surge in firearms -related arrests in the target area driven by close collaboration with ATF, DEA, FBI and Cleveland Police. Not coincidentally homicides were down 20% across the city during that time and down 37% in the target area. Indeed for the entire month of May 2018 there were two homicides in the entire city of Cleveland which was a historic low.

Now just based on these results from the Northern District of Ohio I would say that reduction in violent crime can be achieved through focused law enforcement efforts targeting the most violent offenders and offenses. But as successful as we've been throughout the country in reducing violent crime there are still stubborn pockets of resistance where greater federal effort could help turn the tide. And with that objective in mind last December Attorney General Barr announced Operation Relentless Pursuit, a DOJ driven US attorney-led initiative to significantly reduce violent crime in seven cities where the statistical trends have been resistant to traditional law-enforcement methods. These seven cities are Albuquerque, Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit, Kansas City, Memphis and Milwaukee.

Operation Relentless Pursuit is described by the Attorney General as a two-prong effort. First it will surge federal agents, analysts and equipment into the seven ORP cities to enhance our efforts to combat violent crime, gangs and drug trafficking. This is a tremendous commitment of talent and resources by ATF, DEA FBI and the United States Marshal Services.

Second, Justice Department has committed to providing significant resources to our state and local law enforcement partners in order to guarantee that Operation Relentless Pursuit has a lasting presence in this fight against violent crime over the long term. These funds will support task force operations as designed by US attorneys in those cities and provide a longer term commitment to hire as many as 400 police officers in the designated cities. I thank you again for the opportunity to address this esteemed panel. Thank you and I look forward to any questions you may have.

Phil Keith: Thank you for your informative testimony Mr. Herdman and your service. Our next distinguished witness is Sheriff Jim Skinner from Collin County, Texas. Sheriff I hope you and your deputies are staying safe during these most challenging times. You're now recognized Sheriff Skinner.

Jim Skinner: Thank you Director Keith. Good afternoon. My name is Jim Skinner. I'm the Sheriff of Collin County, Texas, a county of just over 1 million people located directly north of Dallas County in the northeast quadrant of the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex. The DFW Metropolitan planning area includes 12 counties with a population of just over 7.4 million people. I'm a 30-year law enforcement veteran, was elected sheriff in the 2016 elections and took the oath of office in January of 2017. Our organization consists of 557 employees and we typically have an average daily jail population of around 1100 inmates.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to make my recommendations to the commission on how to reduce crime. Since time is short I'll get right to it. My first recommendation is that other sheriffs in contiguous counties across the United States that cover major national or state highways designated as drug transportation corridors set up flexible cooperative criminal highway interdiction efforts. An interdiction effort is a way to use one of a sheriff's key strengths -- jurisdiction over miles of state and federal highways and roads to fight the smuggling of illegal narcotics, weapons, bulk cash and victims of human trafficking by organized crime and a location they must use and are therefore vulnerable on - those same highways and roads. Highway interdiction is effective in terms of arrests, seizures and recoveries.

For my second recommendation I believe that one of the most important technological advantages that we possess to detect smuggling is the Automatic License Plate Reader known as the ALPR. My second recommendation to the commission is that the federal law enforcement authorities should be directed to establish a national database or clearinghouse for all ALPR data that meet a certain threshold for use by law enforcement. A national database or clearinghouse for law enforcement ALPR data would bring to the thousands of law-enforcement agencies: 1), uniform standards for the inclusion of data in the database, 2) uniform policies for access to, maintenance of and use or dissemination of data, 3) appropriate standards for data or cyber security such as CJIS compliance, 4) a single location for law enforcement quality data thus reducing the need for deputies to check multiple vendor databases while on a traffic stop on the side of the highway in the middle of the night, and 5) a platform for officers to communicate about their interdiction operations and investigations. As part of establishing a national ALPR database for law enforcement I also recommend a rule that requires a law enforcement agency to upload all of its law enforcement ALPR data into the database in exchange for membership in and access to the national database.

Recommendation three, I recommend that we encourage and incentivize criminal highway interdiction units to build strong partnerships with other state and local interdiction units as well as federal law enforcement agencies and to freely share information and intelligence as well as hotlist and working methods in law enforcement. While we talk a lot about interagency communication and cooperation the truth is that sometimes we backslide. But we know that successful interdiction operations require the constant exchange of information and intelligence. In the past six weeks for example the sharing of intelligence between our interdiction here in North Texas, the Drug Enforcement Administration, HSI and other interdictors resulted in the seizure of over 2225 kilos of methamphetamines and related traffic stops here in Collin County along the eastern seaboard of the United States and near Laredo, Texas on the border with Mexico.

Now here's our story. When I was elected sheriff I knew at least four key facts. Number one, murderers, car thieves, drug smugglers, human traffickers and criminals of every ilk use the same roads and highways as everyone else. Number two, Texas sheriffs have countywide jurisdiction over large stretches of highways the transnational organized crime syndicates and Mexican cartels use daily. Number three, in 2006 the then National Drug Intelligence Center identified eight major drug transportation corridors and at least two of them run through major interstate highways in the region of Texas where I serve. And four I know from our experiences in Collin County the smugglers are still using the major highways of North Texas to smuggle illegal narcotics, weapons, bulk cash and undocumented immigrants here into other regions of the United States.

In the fall 2017 seven north Texas sheriffs and I met and agreed to work together to stem the flow of drug and human trafficking in our counties. And we turned to an old proven technique, criminal highway interdiction but we added a new twist. We took highly trained deputies put them in the same uniforms in similarly marked vehicles without county names and by executing mutual aid agreements between the sheriff's we extended the jurisdiction of these deputies into all eight counties. We discovered this to be a low incremental cost initiative. And with each sheriff checking his ego at the door and supporting one another we each ended up with a force multiplier and a much bigger net to catch criminals traveling our highways and roads.

In the past two years the North Texas Sheriff's Criminal Interdiction Unit has accomplished the following. We've arrested over 130 smugglers. We've captured several capital murderers. We recovered over 100 stolen motor vehicles. We've seized tons of illegal narcotics and marijuana.

We've seized many southbound military style weapons with ammunition. We've seized over \$2 million in bulk cash and we've interdicted commercial vehicles with loads of human cargo but most importantly these units rescued three missing or abducted children in unrelated highway traffic stops. In my 30 years of experience I've never witnessed better coordination and intelligence sharing and interactions between federal, state and local law enforcement than what has evolved

from those operations conducted by the North Texas Sheriff's Criminal Interdiction Unit. The sheer volume of our seizures absolutely dwarfs what we would have achieved otherwise.

Lastly I would reiterate that one of the most important technological advantages that we have to detect smugglers who use our nation's highways is the Automatic License Plate Reader. I have further comments related to the use of ALPRs by criminal highway interdictors that I don't have time here to share but I will include those in my written testimony to the commission. Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today to testify about my ideas on crime reduction. Yours is a critical task and I appreciate your commitment to this effort. I stand ready to try and answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

Phil Keith: Thank you Sheriff Skinner for your enlightened testimony and particularly your service. Our next witness is distinguished Chief of Police from Nashville Metropolitan Police Department, Chief Steve Anderson. Chief Anderson we know your Nashville community is recently been hit with a number of challenges starting with the floods then the deadly devastating tornadoes and now the COVID-19 virus, and I'm sure you've had a few crime challenges along the way. Your department remains in our thoughts and prayers and hope you're doing well. Would also like to thank you for serving as a chair of one of our working groups. Thank you for joining the commission day. Chief Anderson you're now recognized.

Operator: Just ((inaudible)). We're having a little trouble with his line. One moment please. Let me see if I can re-establish that connection Director. One moment please.

Phil Keith: Thank you (John).

Operator: We've re-established the connection with the Chief.

Steve Anderson: Okay, thank you very much. Starting again, Nashville is a city county government 533 square miles, 670,000 population, some densely populated areas and some sparsely populated areas. And today we were asked to talk about a neighborhood engagement team that we formulated in conjunction and in cooperation with the assistance of the public safety partnership from the Department of Justice.

Downtown, we commonly refer to as 40th and Clifton, 40 Avenue North and Clifton Avenue. It's over in the west, northwest part of Nashville. I have with me today Commander, David Corman from the West Precinct and Sergeant Jason Picanzo who ran that team. So I'm going to enter – let them - I'm going to introduce Commander Corman and let him talk about how the team was formulated and then Sergeant Picanzo will tell you about some of the successes. Commander?

David Corman: Thank you sir. So in the late 2017 the PSP approached MMPD with a proposal to reduce crime and restore sustainable relationships within the communities that are experiencing sustained levels of violence that exceed the national average. And of course as Chief Anderson said the area selected was 40th and Clifton. The concept was to focus our efforts on community engagement to reduce crime and not using traditional crime-fighting methods. One thing that the team wanted to do was look at re-establishing the public's ability to police themselves. And one way to do that was through Sergeant McConnell explained the methods that they used but what we really wanted to instill was a form of collective efficacy. And of course everybody knows that's the members of the community's ability to control individuals or groups within their own community, hence the public policing themselves.

So one of the several important things to do here was we had to establish a team, an area, a target area, a very selective group of officers. You can't just have anybody doing this. And one thing that we had to learn from our past was that community policing was it had to be sustainable. You can't go in there and resolve a problem and then leave when the problem's done because then you're

going to fracture any trust that you have already built. But with that I'm going to let Sergeant Picanzo talk about some of the efforts that they did.

Jason Picanzo: Thanks Commander. I want to repeat something you mentioned was a tactic that I think many departments or agencies would use is in a high crime area most often we would send a lot of resources all at once to extinguish the issue and then often times those teams would leave the area. And that will - the presence of police is not sustainable there. And so that's the difference of this team that when we started in 2018 was that we were not going to leave and that instead of just running in there and focusing on enforcement we were focusing on community policing and engagement of those communities.

And the way we wanted to go about doing that was we knew we had to build strong kinship and trust within these communities. Often high crime areas don't have the greatest relationship with police. And we knew that if we had a strong bond and relationship that we could really do some positive things in that community. And as simple as it sounds the first thing our team started to do was we just what we call it broke bread with them. We would have coffee and donuts in the alley of this neighborhood. And first there would be no one that would come out there and eventually one person came out and eat with us and have some coffee and donuts and that grew to ten, 15, 20 people once a week would do that.

And we would just do this every week and that's the sustainability was - weren't leaving. Every week it would grow. And through the coffee and donuts and breaking bread the officers, the conversations would lead into deeper conversations about their own personal lives. And once they started getting to talk about personal issues, the officers start to learn about issues going on with the residents such as maybe they're having issues with food in their own home, maybe they're having issues paying utilities.



I found a man who needed a bed. He was sleeping on the floor for five years and he was in his 70s. And what the officer was able to do, the team was able to do, was we have a really good working relationship obviously with our FOP here. And the FOP was able to give us the funds to do what we call the CPR program to help supply these people. And it was extremely important and to the success of our team because doing these things for this - the residents - is it did form bonds and we started to work on crime more intentionally instead of being thrown out this wide cast net of focus on this neighborhood, these residents that live there 24/7 were able to tell us specifically what to look for and where to go to find it.

And we knew we made it as a team after months of being there we had had a shooting in that neighborhood while our team was there. My team was working on the victim and he was - had been shot. And when patrol showed up who hadn't been over there very - who is not over there every day like my team neighbors - weren't talking to the patrol officers. They didn't know those guys, they didn't see nothing. And then when my team showed up over there they told us who shot him, what it was about, where the gun was and that's when we knew we had the cooperation with the neighborhood there. And so through the community's cooperation in partnering with the police it was able to lead to significant crime reduction. We were able to work more efficiency - efficiently sorry.

And what led from that was just the collective efficacy. And what that is, is that's the police working with the neighbors and the non-profits and the churches and the FOP. And because of that we were just a seven man team going in the community. Now we were bigger. We had a whole community that became a part of our team. We were able to bring life back into this neighborhood that was just inundated with crime so where now it's a safe and comfortable neighborhood to live in.

And I'm proud to say that after being there for two years in the year we started, our first full year in 2018. In 2019 we had a 40% reduction in overall crime and a 40% reduction in violent crime in this

area that's known to have, you know, sustained violent crime. It's – It's not the same neighborhood it once was before we got to start doing this.

David Corman: And, you know, Commander Corman again. And also in the room there's another Sergeant we - Sergeant Travis Martin. We started a second community engagement team because the first one was so successful. And we're doing the same thing over and over again. And if you think about that 40% reduction of violent crime in a neighborhood that was known as, you know, they call the alley which is I think a 1/4 mile long if that, the jungle. You can't go in that area unless you live there and if you did you were at risk.

Now we've got, you know, residents are having cookouts in their yard. They're having - they had Christmas and the grandkids come over -- something they haven't done in decades. So it really feels good that we were able to help them get their community back. I was surprised at how well it worked.

Steve Anderson: So Chief Anderson back. We have a video testimonial from that neighborhood that we would make available. But this has - this program has been a huge, huge success and I think the best thing I can say about it is the officers in there become the quarterbacks and were able to bring in other assistive agencies, other government agencies non-profits, getting streetlights restored, alleys paved -- that sort of thing.

The so my recommendation to the commission would be to institute teams as such as this everywhere you possibly can. I would point out it's very resource intensive. The neighborhood we're talking about is about 1/2 square mile. And we do know that most of the criminal acts occurring there were people from outside that neighborhood - interlopers. So we know we have displaced some crime and so then we need to go to the next neighborhood and the next neighborhood. And I think the point is conventional staffing models aren't appropriate here, you know, models based on population or models based on crime data. You have to be able to devote the resources to a

particular small area if you're going to make a difference in those persons' lives. So thank you for the opportunity to make this presentation and we look forward to any questions you may have.

Phil Keith: Thank you Chief and could we get the names of the Commander and the Sergeant again please, and the spelling?

David Corman: Sure. Commander David Corman, C-O-R-M-A-N.

Jason Picanzo: Sergeant Jason Picanzo, P-I-C-A-N-Z-O.

Phil Keith: Thank you and again thank you Chief Anderson for that informative testament and certainly your distinguished service and sacrifices as a longstanding leader in law enforcement.

(Crosstalk)

Phil Keith: Thank you chief. Our last panelist for today is retired Camden County Police Department Chief Scott Thomson. Chief Thomson has some great successes in Camden County and we look forward to hearing his testimony. Chief Thomson, thank you for joining us today. You're now recognized.

Scott Thompson: Thank you Chairman Phil Keith, Vice Chair Katherine Sullivan, Executive Director Dean Kueter and the distinguished commissioners of the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. I am truly humbled and extremely honored to the invitation to provide testimony here today. Now I have written recommendations which will be far more coherent and intelligent than what I will share in my verbal testimony here today but what I'd like to focus primarily on is three key recommendations that we found to be most beneficial in changing the dynamic in Camden. And I will list the three as meaningful, trust building, collaborative policing that's predicated upon human contact would be one. Two is forced multiplying technology which

broadens the scope of coverage that better informs tactics and strategies, and then three is focused partnerships that our mission driven with a laser like focus on reducing violent crime.

Now to provide some context for backdrop to really underscore our lessons learned here in Camden, you know, for the greater part of four decades Camden, New Jersey had the dubious distinction of having some of the highest rates in the nation for crime, poverty, single-parent households, unemployment rate, as our US attorney said earlier, really the social inequities that produce the symptom that we know is crime, particularly violent crime.

In 2013 we had a very rare opportunity to create a new Police Department. And it started with the abolishment of the Camden City Police Department of which I was a member and chief of and a constitution of a brand-new organization. But most notably the year before we did that in 2012 this city of 77,000 people of 9 square miles which is 96% minority with a per capita income of less than \$13,000 a year had 67 murders in an area that had 175 open air drug markets. Now for comparison sakes that's a murder rate of 87 per 100,000 -- 18 times the national average. And for further context Honduras that year was the most violent country on the planet with a murder rate of 86 per 100,000. So statistically thinking Camden, New Jersey was arguably one of the most challenged cities in the United States of America. And as many of my colleagues and peers on this call know that, although the issues that vexed us were extreme, they were not unique.

So when we had this opportunity to create a police department and go after what were described as intractable issues for decades we knew that we had the very rare opportunity in a small window of time to get things right. And for us it was really a focus on establishing the right culture because as many of us know, culture will eat policy for breakfast within any organization, and particularly within a law enforcement one.

And we also knew that we had to capture the hearts and minds of this community which up until that point in time had very high levels of mistrust with law enforcement, and to be quite frank with

you, we gave them some pretty good reasons to embrace those feelings. But nonetheless it was a bridge that needed to be repaired. It needed to be repaired immediately for us to be able to make any type of change that would be sustainable.

So we took the approach with community policing in mind, and that it had to be meaningful and that it had to be based upon human contact. We know that building relationships that are established within trust is not something that can be done from afar; it's experiential. And really what we identified was an extremely destabilized neighborhoods which is overwhelmingly our city from border to border is that the equation of safety was really reliant upon a guardian figure with a sense of continuity and meaningful interaction being present within that neighborhood.

And this was not just a squad car sitting there with its windows rolled up and the officer reading a paper or probably more contemporary terms texting on their phone. But it would be with officers getting out of their squad cars in these extremely densely populated neighborhoods and engaging with the people, talking to the people, finding out what matters most to them, ensure that when we're taking aggressive quality of life enforcement actions that we were doing so with them, and not upon them. And we did this by opening the lines of communication so we could find out what had been negatively defined in their lives for years.

And these interactions that we would have could not be solely occurring during moments of crisis or moments of enforcement because that would become the negative lens through which the community would continue to identify us and quite frankly the lens through which officers will start to define the people that they're policing which leads to cynicism. In the first 12 months of us engaging in this extremely outreaching type of methodology of policing we saw our gun seizures raised by 71% and it wasn't because we were stopping and searching every person that walked down the street. It was because now we were receiving information from people that just wouldn't the opportunity for them to communicate with us before wasn't there. And what you find in any neighborhood, even your most challenged neighborhood is that you have far more good people

than you have negative dwellers. And that they would tell us where these people were hiding their guns and how they were running their operations.

Most remarkably with this we saw our solve rate in murders go from a dismal 16% up to 61% within a 24 month period. We would often have murders where we - everybody knew who did it but we could never prove it because people just wouldn't talk to us. But once people within the neighborhood got to know the officers by name and the people – and the officers got to know the people by name the return on that investment was just exponential.

With regards to the technology, our technology that we leverage is one in which it really gives us the ability to manufacture time so that with that equation of having the officers in the neighborhood, the accountability of an officer's day and structuring what they're doing and how they're doing it gives us the ability to create hours within the day so that they can be out of their squad cars and engaging with the people and not just simply running from call to call to call.

This is - this was done through a crowd-based CAD RMS system in which we leveraged Shot Spotter. We leveraged our ADL with our automatic vehicle locator with geo-fencing capabilities to let us know where we were or where we needed to be. We have dashboards which give us the resource utilization of the assets that we have out the field. As the great sheriff on this call talked about, the utilization of LPR data which not coincidentally - help solve more violent crimes than actually videos do for us. And it cannot be understated the importance of that. But presenting this real time picture for a watch commander to be able to properly deploy and manage their assets out in the field gives - it just gives us the ability to get in front of crime and to stop it from occurring in the first place.

And then finally I'd like to end with the partnerships. Probably the greatest gift that was given to me as a police chief was the ability to participate in the Project Safe Neighborhoods by the collaboration and efforts that we received and training and technical assistance from the FBI, from the DEA, from

the ATF. They enhanced our internal capacity to operate on a daily basis. Instead of just deploying with a bunch of resources, locking up folks and then leaving, you know, they just didn't hand us a fish. They gave us a pole and told us how to fish.

ATF came in, helped us get a NIBIN machine, helped us train up our own analysts. And now when gunshots occur in my city I can connect the dots on shootings within hours as opposed to months. The US attorney's office has attorneys that are - sit with us on daily briefings and are part of our strategy and our strategic meetings on how we are going to approach violent crime. And as again, to reference the great sheriff earlier on the call it - really these meetings are most beneficial because everyone's leaving their patches and their badges at the door and they're working collectively with a laser-like focus on making neighborhoods safer.

So in closing Chairman Keith, you know, since 2012 when we put this in place, the good news is within 24 months we saw a 40% reduction really across the board in our crime. And as it stands today, here we are seven years later, our murders are reduced 67%, our shootings are reduced 66%. Total violent crime in the city of Camden is down 42%. We went from 175 open-air drug markets to less than 20 which just underscores that that which is being done is sustainable. And to wrap it up I think it's really this paradoxical kind of back to the future type of paradigm where we leveraged leading-edge technology which directs Peelian principled, you know, Bobby type of policing methodology, which is akin to what was taking place in 1829.

And, you know, lastly we don't solely focus on metrics ((inaudible)) written or people arrested but rather how I was judging officer's performance before I left was when I drove down the street, I wanted to know how many grandparents were sitting on their front steps, I wanted to see kids riding their bikes in front of their homes, and people feeling comfortable to walk to the corner store. And probably the greatest statistic that we can focus in on is that we have less mothers burying their sons in the city which just made it really all meaningful and really what we're all here for today. So

I thank you for this opportunity to the commission and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

Phil Keith: Thank you Chief Thomson for your valued testimony and your service. Commissioners, we're now open for questions. As previously noted, commissioners with a question please state your name prior to your question and direct your question to a specific panelist you have a question for, or if it's for response from the entire panel please state so. Just as a reminder to the commissioners, your mics are hot at all times. Thank you and now commissioners with questions.

Craig Price: Hey Phil this is Craig Price.

Phil Keith: Yes. Yes Commissioner Price is recognized.

Craig Price: Thank you very much. This question is for Amy Blasher. Appreciate your testimony on the information from the FBI and estimated violent crime offense. I just have a question on your chart regarding violent crime trends. I think when we look back at the ten year stretch literally from 2009 to 2018 we're lower than what we were back then. But if you break it down a little bit further it looks like the first two years of that, 2009 to 2011, there was a significant decrease. And then since 2011 they stayed the same or maybe even increased slightly. So I'm just curious if you have any input as to first off what might have caused a significant downgrade from 2009 to 2011 and then maybe why it's leveled off since then?

Amy Blasher: Thank you for your question. Unfortunately I'm not sure we're going to be able to answer why we are seeing the decrease. Gathering some of the other panelists and the witnesses, you know, I think a lot of the crime prevention that needed local communities or states are employing might have an effect on that. But as far as the why behind we're seeing those decreases, we would not be able to comment at this time.



Craig Price: Okay, so there was nothing in particular as far as a nationwide policy or anything that would attribute to the - that you can comment on specifically to the decrease from '09 to 2011? And then I do know from that chart that from 2011 till now or to 2018 it stayed level or even increased slightly. I was just wondering if there was some policy that could be attributed to for that timeframe? Thank you.

Amy Blasher: Sure. We are not aware of any national policy that may have affected that trend.

Craig Price: Okay, thank you.

Regina Lombardo: President Keith, Regina Lombardo Commissioner. I have a question for US Attorney Herdman.

Phil Keith: Yes Director, you're recognized.

Regina Lombardo: Thank you US Attorney Herdman. I'm really appreciative of your focus especially on federal firearms violations as well as your focus with Operation Relentless Pursuit. As you know the Project Guardian is pretty much the focus of overall violent crime initiatives. So when I ask you, what do you feel that the - how does Operation Relentless Pursuit reinforce Project Guardian for those that may need a little bit of assistance in figuring out how that all ties together? Can you give us what you as a US Attorney see that as the reinforcement to Project Guardian?

Justin Herdman: Sure, well Guardian is – has, you know, the five main principles behind it. Federal firearms prosecutions are just one of them, and it's more expansive too in the sense that it's also designed to prevent invasion of federal firearms laws related to background checks that there is enhanced information sharing, that we have coordinated response on mental health denials for firearms and then finally that we leverage our technology with respect to ATF, CJIS and more broadly with the

use of NIBIN and firearms tracing. So I'll focus on that last part with respect to the technology and the role that ATF plays in Relentless Pursuit.

You know, many of our investigations are predicated on leads that are run out from NIBIN or from an eTrace that launch us into a broader firearms traffic investigation or a broader network type of investigation. And what Project Guardian recognizes is the importance of those initial leads by centralizing this plank as one of the important objectives of Guardian. And Relentless Pursuit puts us in a position where we'll have not only more ATF agents on the streets in the seven respective cities, but we'll also have a huge number of task force officers who are available to us. It's not just local police officers. It's also, in the case of Cleveland for instance, we have adult parole, we have State Highway Patrol, we have our investigative unit from the state which is focused on enforcing liquor violations. These are all agencies that contribute significantly to our ability to identify hotspots in our cities, and then to work from the shooting level or the firearms level, up to identify gangs and other organizations who are associated with those firearms and those violent acts that are linked to those firearms.

So it's a resource surge that really does allow us to interrupt the shooting cycle. So in the ATF, I know you speak about it all the time Director, the importance of that and getting inside that shooting cycle. And it is really our hope to both build to disrupt on the street level of the shooting cycles, but then over time with the resources that we have provided to us from our national level agency partners, to also work broader enterprise investigations that will have the kind of meaningful impact that I outlined that we've been able to do when you talk about taking down a larger drug trafficking organization like we've done successfully across the country over and over and over again. Hopefully that answers your question.

Regina Lombardo: Yes, I appreciate the clarification. As you know that this committee and this panel is primarily that's the big focus and I think that both looking at Relentless Pursuit, looking at Project

Guardian and utilizing all of that is really the focus here so I appreciate your answer to that. Thank you.

Justin Herdman: Thank you.

Chris Evans: This is Chris Evans. I have a question.

Phil Keith: Commissioner Evans, you're recognized.

Chris Evans: Thank you. And first of all I missed your opening statement but I would like to add for the record that I was able to hear the testimony of all the panelists and I want to thank them all for their service and commitment. I have a question for Sheriff Skinner. And you discussed a little bit about the license plate reader programs and the applicability for making it nationwide. And I'm sure it's going to be in the information you submit but I'd be curious to get your thoughts. My understanding that is that there is a National License Plate Reader program in the El Paso Intelligence Center and I'm not sure if that connects with what you do. And if not, I'd like to hear some clarification on how that system could be done better or how the connection could be enhanced or what you do.

Jim Skinner: That's a great question. I think that probably the most direct way to answer your question is to first tell you that, yes, we do use their system of readers. We do have – there's a certain process you have to go through in order to access those, and our interditors have gone through all the training and been certified to do that. So we do access those readers.

The problem though, the problem that we face here in the United States is that the readers you're referring to are stretched along the southern corridor and across the state of Texas for example. So when you pass that last reader you're – you're then entered into a territory where it's just this vast void of any way for another interditor in the United States to access that information.

What I propose is that there's a lot of state and local law enforcement officers and departments that use license plate readers. We need to have a common system by which those companies that take in that data that we're using the law enforcement data from, those folks and it's all submitted the same way, so we have access not only to the series of license plate readers that you're referring to used by the federal government now, but we would also have access to all of these 30 or so different LPR companies that pull in this data. There needs to be certain guidelines established for the submission of certain parts of that information into a national database that gives everyone the ability to read it. I don't need to just know whether sometime somebody to verify a person's story whether somebody hits a reader down close to the border, I need to be able to also verify through that same system if I make a query whether or not that person had gone to Little Rock and turned around and come back within a matter of hours. And that might only be important based on the story that he's telling the deputy on the side of the highway, and it's just a unique tool to use to be able to confirm whether or not the person is being truthful or not.

Chris Evans: Thank you very much sir.

David Rausch: This is David Rausch.

Frazier: This is...

Phil Keith: Okay we have two commissioners.

David Rausch: I'll yield to the other.

Frazier: I'll - this is Commissioner Frazier. I wanted to jump in there on the LPRs. Since I did have Sheriff Skinner on the phone and he is my Sheriff here in Collin County who's doing a magnificent job and he's taking this head on, the one problem and Sheriff Skinner, you could probably tell this better. The one problem I see with the LPRs is there - aren't they a private - a public safety partnership?

Aren't those readers on some of those readers, those LPR readers, aren't they on some of the private entities that are out there roaming around grabbing the data and the information?

Jim Skinner: Certainly. I mean there are private companies. There's a number of private companies that are pulling data off of readers on a daily basis. And these of course are kept in their database. There are a certain reads of course. There's contracts where this data is kept by law enforcement agencies. Certain parts of that data are kept by law enforcement agencies. And this is why we need submission criteria to upload to a national database. There's a lot of different individual databases.

So really to cut right to the chase, this is why I believe that there needs to be this federal entity established for example the commissioner who asked me the question previously, the Drug Enforcement Administration already is - has a very effective system by which they operate a very strict system on the LPR readers. Well they should be, in my opinion, the steppingstone. They've done the leg work, and they're in place and what we're asking to do is to create these policies, to think these things through and to create a common system by which all of law enforcement can operate in the same fashion.

Frazier: Yes and I'll jump in there. And I can't agree more, because where I'm assigned over at the US Marshal Service we use LPRs on a daily basis to track our fugitives. It's not only to track them, but if we have a phone up or if we have a - any kind of device that we're reading and we're trying to put them in a car in an area to get us to a location, it helps tremendously. And with our cartels moving in the way they do in our state, these LPRs are invaluable, and that's just my 2 cents.

I thank you Sheriff for all you've done since - especially since you've gotten here. You've been a godsend for the interdiction portion of our - and especially with the human trafficking. I just want to say since I'm on here thanks to everybody on their comments on this President's Commission. It's been - this has been a very good one.

Phil Keith: Thank you Commissioner Frazier. Commissioner Rausch you had a question.

David Rausch: I do thank you. So to my chief, Chief Anderson here in Nashville, as well as to Chief Thomson, one of the key things I heard you say and it really kind of focus is an understanding that relationships are a significant piece of crime control. Can you expound on that a bit for us in terms of the importance of local law enforcement relationships?

Scott Thomson: Chief Anderson you can go first place.

Steve Anderson: You know, our headquarters sits on Murfreesboro Road and Fayette Street and I worked there as a patrol officer. And I remember a prostitute telling me one day, "All you know about what goes on out here is what I tell you." And it somewhat upset me at the time because I thought I knew a lot. But after I thought about it I realized that is correct. So relationships are important. And I don't think we could solve many crimes, outside of those being committed on in front of a video camera, without help from someone, and often that's in neighborhoods where people do not have confidence in the police or they fear some retribution because the police come in and investigate, and then they leave.

So these neighborhood engagement teams are so very important. And, you know, I'll emphasize what I said earlier they're very resource intensive. So you have to believe - you have to be willing to pay the price in terms of the expended resources. But this 40th and Clifton area in Nashville is a testimonial of - as to what can be done if you focus on a particular neighborhood. And again, we know that we have displaced some of the crime because most of the crime being committed were the interlopers, the people coming in to commit whatever offenses they had planned. So we know we need to address them wherever they are now. But we know that that one neighborhood is very happy to be a neighborhood in the sense of being able to sit on their front porch, or being able to actually interact with each other.

Phil Keith: Thank you Chief Anderson. Chief Thomson?

Scott Thomson: Thank you Commissioner Rausch. You know I think for me it really started with the understanding and knowledge of how difficult and ineffective we were when we didn't have strong relationships and then really starting with the understanding of that, in a democracy, our authority is derived by the consent of the people. And that if we could harness that, and if we could work towards achieving that, that we would be able to make inroads into areas that we were just completely unsuccessful for decades within.

And when we really put a hyper focus on that, and we were treating people with respect and dignity, it just made us smarter, it made us better, it made us far more effective in what we're trying to do. And, you know, it really comes down to the precept that the time to make friends is not when you need it. And here in a city like Camden where again it's, you know, it's 96% minority it's extremely - cities of 50,000 or more is a portion of the country and when we would still have I mean we're policing in this environment we still have challenging moments.

And now when there is a use of force incident or a shooting, an officer involved shooting the community reacts completely differently now. And I'm not saying that they're – that they love us but many parts of the city don't hate us anymore, which is a significant progress to make and really helps mitigate against civil unrest. And, but really more importantly, just gives us the ability to interact and, you know, achieve the common goal of having a safer environment, not just for the people that live there, but for the officers that are working there as well.

You know, and again it's not coincidental to us with these enhanced relationships, and with our new policing style that we embraced really about seven years ago, the number of assaults on officers have dropped significantly over that point time. So, you know, when we're treating people with respect and dignity and we're building relationships our effectiveness is increased tenfold.

David Rausch: Thank you.

Phil Keith: Other commissioners with questions.

Erica MacDonald: This is Erica MacDonald. May I ask a question?

Phil Keith: Yes ma'am. Commissioner?

Erica MacDonald: Okay, and I think this is - the question I have is most directed at Sheriff Skinner or Chief Anderson, however, Justin if you have an answer or comment on this please do so. I'm on the Reduction of Crime subgroup dealing with collaboration - looking at the issue of collaboration with key stakeholders. One of the issues we're looking at, we're trying to really come up with a best practice model, is the involvement in the clergy and how important getting community leaders by way of clergy involved in our efforts and, you know, winning the credibility of the community. So either Sheriff Skinner or Chief Anderson do you have any comments on that? Do you have any model that you're using in getting clergy involvement in helping with relationships of law enforcement with community?

(Crosstalk)

Phil Keith: Sheriff Skinner.

Steve Anderson: Go ahead Sheriff.

Jim Skinner: Yes sir. I can speak on behalf of Collin County. We've made a real effort to reach out on the interfaith basis to visit with and form those relationships with all faiths here in Collin County. I know that we do this in a number of different ways. We've asked these folks to gather from time to time so we can explain to them what their Sheriff's office is doing for them. We, as you might imagine



because we have the jail here in the county, we have a lot of programs where ministers and religious leaders from different faiths come and visit with the inmates here at the facility. And we try to take advantage of that by of course visiting with them. It's I don't know that we have a formalized policy more than we just sort of have a policy where you put your foot up on the rail post and make it a point to visit with these folks on a continual basis.

We can kind of monitor the tempo in our detention facility a lot of times based on the frequency of the visits that we get from the clergy as funny as that may seem. But I know that I'm not alone in that. I'm sure that there's sheriffs all across this country that probably experience the same thing. But to sum up just answer your question, our religious leaders and faith leaders are important to us in many respects. And we turn to them especially in these times when we have any kind of incident that occurs. We have a call is that we go through and we have people that we can look to and lean to, who will come out and donate their time and help us in these trying times that our deputies run across every night.

Phil Keith: Thank you Sheriff. Chief Anderson?

Steve Anderson: So very important- we have at any given time about 50 volunteer chaplains. Those people volunteer their own time. We put them through our Citizens Police Academy. They deliver death notices. They help us in particular neighborhoods. Within that group we have a core group of a group of ministers on their own time, day or night, and they come out because there's always about six or eight of them that take on this duty. Any time we have any type of violent crime involving a juvenile or a young adult they come to the scene and then they follow-up. And that has helped us tremendously on the retaliations, because we know if we have one shooting there's going to be another one to retaliate, and then on and on, so they've been so very valuable to us.

The ministers have my cell phone number. So they call me on a regular basis about anything. So we find out a lot of things before they happen so that we can intervene. We have from time to time,

I'll host a meeting here, a light breakfast, for all of the surrounding agencies - the sheriffs, and chiefs, and the security personnel from the various universities and colleges and I'll invite the chaplains to come. And so that way they get to interact and see what's going on in the other counties. Some of the other chiefs have called on our chaplains to come to their city or their county to help organize a similar organization. So we find it very important.

And I was noting before the meeting started here in my conference room I have a picture hanging of former Attorney General Eric Holder with a group of our ministers. He was scheduled to come to town to give a short presentation and they asked me could you arrange for us to meet him? And so Mr. Holder probably could pick me out of a line up so I called on Dave Rivera who was the United States Attorney at the time and he was able to arrange that.

And I'm told that General Holder was so taken with their work and what they had done, that he asked them to follow-up and so that he could use that as a model for other agencies across the land. So that's a picture I'm very proud of hanging here in my office.

Erica MacDonald: Thank you both much. I appreciate it.

Phil Keith: Other commissioners?

Donald Washington: Yes, Chairman this is Don Washington. May I ask a question or two?

Phil Keith: Absolutely Commissioner, you're recognized.

Donald Washington: All right, my question is for both Chief Anderson and Chief Thomson. I mean I think you guys are really getting the nail on the head, but let me play the devil's advocate just for a second. So community policing kind of goes back a long ways. I recall (Lee Brown) as an example in Houston and then in New York, et cetera. And then that concept has sort of popped up over the

years. And so when I see neighborhood engagement teams, as in Chief Anderson's case, and the partnership component of Chief Thomson's case, that sounds sort of a lot like that.

And I think it's a great idea but my question I guess is, what is it that is A, different with your programs and that concept? And secondly if it's sort of the same are we hitting on something that really works, but we're just not getting the word out to the police departments around the country? I mean it just seems like it's almost commonsensical to build trust and then work on getting community engagement, and getting the faith community, and non-profits, and others engaged in sort of policing the communities and things of that sort. And I'm just curious as to whether that's the solution A, and then B, if it's not the solution how do you intend to sustain the gains that you've made so far?

Phil Keith: Thank you Commissioner. Let's start with Chief Anderson and then we'll go to Chief Thomson.

Steve Anderson: Yes, I think this is just a continuation of what we're attempting to do over the years. You know, there's - when you talk about community policing it can take on many, many forms. So I think the key is number one you have to, from the top you have to be willing to devote resources to it. You have to forgo putting those resources in other places. And then two, you have to have the right people. The people that the officers or the supervisors that want to make that difference, to sort of forgo traditional policing.

I think as much as we've tried over the years all of us across the nation, you know, we're busy doing a job every day. And officers are answering calls and going from call to call. And detectives are working very hard to solve whatever offenses have been, criminal offenses have been committed in those neighborhoods, and just do not have the time to engage to this level so as I said early it's very resource intensive. And we know that we're displacing some of that crime to other places which also needs to be addressed.

And that's, I think that's the point of our presentation here, is the support and resources. You know, being able to have enough officers to police those areas in the way that the neighborhood claims to us, as opposed to just coming in answering calls. But again, that would be my plea to the commission, to my own administration, is having enough officers to do that and getting into all the neighborhoods across Nashville where that type of policing is needed, to bring that neighborhood together.

Phil Keith: Thanks Chief Anderson. Chief Thomson.

Scott Thomson: That is a great question. And Chief Anderson hit the nail on the head that it begins with the leader of the organization. It has to be a top-down approach. And I have found that community policing cannot be a unit, it can't be an initiative. It needs to be a culture. It needs to be the philosophical hardwiring of an organization. Now I do think that part of the challenge with policing and community policing exactly to your question, and your point to your question, is that when community policing was incentivized through grants 20, 30 years ago it became a paper exercise for many organizations. Many organizations, to get the money from federal government so they could hire, they would create a unit, put a name to it so they could get the money. And that they would get the officers and it was just - it was in name only and it wasn't in practice, and it wasn't in philosophy, or in theory or really an application.

You would have a handful of officers that were very well intended, and they were given time to do that all day long, while the other officers would do quote unquote real police work. And that was really the organization that I came into 30 years ago. We had a Community Oriented Police, a C-O-P. And the street cop said, "That was Call Other Police right?" It was, you know, someone had a question about helping their child, go call this officer right? I'm waiting around for the big one, and I'm doing the heavy handed enforcement tactics.

But what I have found in my experience in Camden was when I put a significant effort to giving officers time using the science that, and the analysis with technology I could manufacture, time to be able to address the resource issue that Chief Anderson is talking about. And what I found is when I could put officers into these neighborhoods for - with a sense of continuity for longer periods of time my calls for service would actually drop. So that which would traditionally have me pull those officers out so that they would answer the 911 calls for services, was now being significantly lessened by the investment through the community policing.

Now I didn't - I wouldn't call my unit - community policing because I didn't want to fall into the trap. I would call them neighborhood response teams. And as we did this we started with an organization of 400, now through attrition and other hiring challenges we're down to 300. So I'm literally from 400 cops down to 300 cops. And in this process was able to actually get rid of my patrol division. That's right you heard that correctly, we do not have a patrol division in the city of Camden. The entire organization is neighborhood response teams and I don't have a standalone community policing unit per say.

It's every officer that's out there is doing the full panoply of services and work. They're handling 911 calls, they're going to the gun jobs. And they're having their car parked, or they don't have a car at all, and they're on a bike or they're walking a neighborhood. But that is a great question. It's a significant challenge. But if you do not have leadership at the top that's willing to make the investment, and they continue to push through the resistance and the organizational challenges that you will find, you really run the risk of it becoming just, you know, a unit in name only.

(Crosstalk)

Donald Washington: Thank you. I salute you both.

Phil Keith: All right Chief, this is Chief Anderson here. Could I add something to that?

Female: Okay.

Phil Keith: Yes sir. Chief?

Steve Anderson: Just following up on the last two questions, one of the ministers that we were talking about earlier called me a couple days ago, and he wanted police officers to deliver meals across Nashville. And, you know, my first inclination was, you know, we can't do that. We're fresh off this tornado. We've got officers working overtime. We've got this COVID crisis. We're stretched thin. But I caught myself and then actually I conferred with Commander Corman here at the West Precinct. So they're doing that.

And the importance of that is one, the clergy knows they can call and then, two, about 50 meals a day are going out. And these are meals prepared by one of the hospitals. They're diet-appropriate meals for the people in question, whether they are diabetic, whatever it may be. And it's - their package is enough meals to last them for a week. So we're not only making inroads with the clergy in that response but all over Nashville, we've got people grateful who could not get out because of what is going on that are able to eat because our police officers are showing up at their door.

Gina Hawkins: Commissioner Keith this is Chief Hawkins. Can I add a comment please?

Phil Keith: Yes Commissioner you're recognized, please.

Gina Hawkins: I just want to first thank you everyone who provided testimony. But also for the last question that came through, and how Chief Thomson and Chief Anderson was able to eloquently explain the difference of coming through years of historical programs like community oriented policing or community policing, going from a check the box in how you all give testimony to say it is respect, it is from the top. And it is changing the culture or the mind-set that there is no such thing as a one-

way policing. But how you change the culture to know that you cannot afford as I've heard you say not allocate the resources to say less officer involved assaults or engage in the community to build that respect and to build that how you handle it, and change the culture of understanding, this is a movement.

Thank you again for explaining that because it is often difficult to do to say what's so different now? And how does the example of what that you've done historically explain that and show that. And I think that's going to be very important. I just wanted to make a comment and say thank all the people who have provided testimony as well. That's all.

Phil Keith: Other questions from commissioners. Okay, one more time any questions from other commissioners?

Donald Washington: Phil, this is Don Washington. Again, I can't resist but to ask one more question.

Phil Keith: Yes Commissioner, you're recognized.

Donald Washington: This one is for US Attorney Herdman, Justin. Specifically with respect to Operation Relentless Pursuit can you - I mean I'm in the middle of the course but could you just articulate the ultimate dream there that you see with respect to that program? And let me lay a little bit of foundation so, you know, it's been kicked off. The jury is still out as to what's going to ultimately happen and all of that. But I think I understand where you're headed with it, but I'd like to hear you just sort of articulate that. And by the way, thank you for your leadership of that program because I think it's been fantastic to date, but let me hear what you've got to say about the future on that if you would please.

Justin Herdman: Sure. Thank you Director. And I'll just crib off of what the Attorney General has expressed as his objectives with respect to the program which is that in these seven cities where we've seen

these persistently stubborn high violent crime rates -- Cleveland is one of them -- that we will be able to have a dramatic effect on violent crime in those cities by surging federal resources and by providing additional support to state and local partners in order to help supplement those efforts, and in fact, lead those efforts. Starting at the street level with encounters related to either drug distribution, or shootings, or other types of arms-related offenses, working our way up to larger gang investigations and enterprise-level investigations.

And by hitting criminal activity at multiple levels over the course of, not just a couple of weeks or a couple of months, like we've been able to do effectively, but we're talking over a couple of years here that we're going to see significant impacts on the daily activity in the cities and the quality of life in these cities. The advantage we have by embracing our locals in the way that we've done, and the approach here under Relentless Pursuit is to adopt what those locals already have in place with respect to their community policing.

It's not something that on the federal side we're really that experienced with. In fact Director your Marshall Service is probably the closest to it based on your reliance on task force officers. And I know here in Cleveland our US Marshall has relied very heavily on a network of clergy to institute safe surrender programs. So it's not something that the federal agencies have as much experience with as our locals do. But by incorporating the community piece along with the enforcement efforts, you know, our objective is to see measurable, demonstrable reduction in violent crime in the cities that have so far resisted traditional law enforcement methods to do just that thing.

Donald Washington: Thanks.

Justin Herdman: Welcome.

Phil Keith: Other commissioners with questions? Well, let me close by thanking our panelists once again for your time and most valuable testimony and response to the questions from commissioners. On



behalf of Attorney General Barr and his leadership staff, Rachel Bissex and Jeff Favitta and all the Commissioners, your contributions provided today are most sincerely appreciated and will assist the Commission in their deliberations and work.

Before we end the call today just a reminder to commissioners in our listening audience that we have two additional teleconference calls this week, tomorrow, Wednesday, April 8 from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm Eastern Time. We'll be focusing on gun related crime issues. And then on Thursday, April 9th from 11:00 am to noon we will receive testimony about violent criminal gangs. Are there any questions or comments from commissioners? If not, if there is no further business before us today, the President's Commission is adjourned. Thank you again commissioners for your dedication and your commitment and thank you again panelists for your testimony today. Please be safe.

Male: Thank you panelists.

Operator: This concludes today's call.

Male: Thank you everybody.

Operator: Thank you for your participation. You may now disconnect.