

HEARING NINE

Community Engagement

May 28–June 18, 2020

The following summary is intended to provide an overview and highlights of the testimony and discussion during the hearings. For a full and detailed account of the hearings, please refer to the [Commission website](#) and the audio recordings and transcripts located there.

Community Engagement in the Criminal Justice System, June 18, 2020

First Panelist: *Scott Turner, Executive Director, President's Opportunity Zone Revitalization Council.*

Highlights:

- The Opportunity Zone Revitalization Council is made up of representatives from 15 federal agencies and three state and regional partners. Its purpose is to streamline resources into Opportunity Zone projects, for economic development and community development.
- The council was formed on the four pillars of entrepreneurship, economic development, work force and education, and safe neighborhoods. Following more than 150 convenings in communities across the country, it has expanded to also focus on healthcare access, with particular attention to telehealth and minority-serving institutions, and on educational resources, with particular attention to distance learning.

Second Panelist: *Reverend Charles Harrison, Senior Pastor, Barnes United Methodist Church, and President, Indianapolis Ten Points Coalition*

Highlights:

- The Ten Points coalition was formed by a group of Indianapolis pastors in response to violence in four Indianapolis neighborhoods. At the mayor's invitation, they formed a collaborative partnership with the city and law enforcement. Stakeholders were brought together under a community policing model to address gang violence, interpersonal violence, and violence related to drug trafficking.
- The coalition has three main goals:
 - Reduce the number of homicides.
 - Reduce the number of non-fatal shootings and stabbings?
 - Redirect the lives of young people who were most likely to be the victims and perpetrators of violent crimes.
- Because the churches were involved, residents were willing to get involved. Law enforcement and the community were able to share intelligence about what was driving violence and identify individuals and groups who were a threat to the peace.
- With the support of the local business community, the coalition was able to settle at-risk individuals in jobs with livable wages; those individuals were able to help pull others in the neighborhood out of criminal activity. Since 2016, homicides have been reduced dramatically: one neighborhood is 43 days from going four years without a homicide, one is 93 days from four

of five years without a homicide, one is 37 days from two of five years, and the neighborhood with the highest crime rate has just gone one year without.

- To achieve this, the coalition built trust between the community and law enforcement. They held dialog sessions with the Fraternal Order of Police and with the patrol officers in the neighborhoods, as well as with young people in the community.
- This partnership between churches and law enforcement helped deradicalize policing in areas with high police-community tension. Pastors and community leaders held public safety walks with law enforcement to start building relationships between police and the community. Since these community-building partnerships began, these neighborhoods have experienced no police shootings.

Third Panelist: Reverend Markel Hutchins, President and CEO, MovementForward

Highlights:

- Having deep relationships across identities and roles helps us see others as individuals and avoid applying stereotypes. Until law enforcement officers becoming intimately involved with the specific neighborhoods and citizens they police, we will continue to see disturbing incidents like the one in Minneapolis.
- Communities want law enforcement and order administered equally regardless of race or socioeconomic status. At the same time, citizens must remember that police have very dangerous jobs and should respect the burden they carry by following the law and holding each other accountable.
- The belief that we need to build bridges led me to launch the One Church, One Precinct (OneCOP) Initiative, a uniform, structured program to maximize and leverage relationships between police departments and faith leaders.

Recommendations:

- While the current national discussion is centered around reforming police policies and procedures, the greater need is for relational reform that focuses on how law enforcement professionals and everyday Americans view one another—particularly implicit bias.
- Promote shared acceptance of responsibility of public safety by everyone.
- Promote strategic and targeted training modules that provide tools to help identify and remove subconscious bias while refocusing law enforcement from a warrior to a guardian mentality.
- Invest in recruiting and retaining a diverse law enforcement workforce at every level and a dramatic shift in culture across the board.
- Immediately schedule a White House or DOJ roundtable with corporate and business leaders so they can bring their expertise and resources to bear to enable law enforcement to become better connected to the populations they serve.
- Commence a new program to dedicate federal dollars to law enforcement recruitment and loan forgiveness for students who commit to law enforcement careers: Police for America, akin to Teach for America. Start the program at HBCUs.

- Scale up DOJ grant funding for programs that incentivize law enforcement collaboration with community organizations.
- Increase federal grant making to market positive stories that balance the negative imagery we see too often about law enforcement.
- This Commission and the DOJ should consider hosting a national town hall meeting on policing and community engagement.

Question-and-Answer Session, June 18, 2020

Q: [David Rausch for Mr. Turner]: How can we incorporate the Opportunity Zone effort into a community engagement effort with the police?

A: [Turner]: DOJ representatives have gone with us to some of our convenings, as the leads on the safe neighborhoods pillar. We visited a ministry and community engagement activity in Florida that works on reentry and community development between law enforcement and the community. DOJ has already been very active.

Q: [David Rausch for Reverend Harrison]: How did you break the barriers you were talking about? What was that effort?

A: [Harrison]: First, we started having conversations with ex-offenders in these neighborhoods, trying to get feedback from them, because we really needed them in order to have serious conversations between law enforcement and the individuals in cliques and gangs in the neighborhood. The other part was a serious conversation with the FOP to start a dialog on the law enforcement side. We started putting together a framework of the conversation, then bringing in small groups, where law enforcement was allowed to meet with young men from the community and ex-offenders. It took us several years to really break down those barriers.

Q: [Katherine Sullivan for Mr. Turner]: In reentry and drug court programs, if people are unable to pay for those things, they're not necessarily able to participate in the rehabilitative programs. Do you know any programs addressing that?

A: [In Orlando, there is a nonprofit community-based ministry, Orlando World Outreach Center with Pastor Tim Johnson, that helps people pay their court costs through public/private partnerships. There are others as well.

Q: [Katherine Sullivan for Reverend Hutchins]: First, how do we build bridges of trust when there are outside instigators coming into a community? And, second, can we highlight the idea of a national conference with faith-based leaders?

A: [Hutchins]: To the first question, a department cannot wait until crisis arises to build the kinds of relationships and rapport that are necessary to beat back or defend against the kind of outside agitation we've seen in certain cities. And our research internally has shown that law enforcement agencies that have robust relationships with community organizations are able to quickly identify who these outside provocateurs are. And when that happens, those legitimate community organizers are able to themselves cull and weed out those outside agitators. I think the FBI and other intelligence-gathering agencies should be part of that conversation.

To the second question, I think in this environment it would be a missed opportunity if this Commission didn't send a strong signal to the nation that the Commission and the DOJ and the administration are not

tone-deaf to what is happening on America's streets. How do we heal and move this nation forward. For example in Atlanta, yesterday our district attorney announced a, in my view, politically motivated charging against two officers. There is this rush to judgement and we cannot keep going like that. So I believe it's a missed opportunity if this Commission concludes without having a significant public engagement in some format.