

**City of Cleveland and U.S. Justice Department convening,
January 28, 2015**

Good afternoon Cleveland residents, colleagues, public safety forces, public servants, Mayor Frank Jackson and U.S. Attorney, Steven Dettelbach.

My name is Juan Molina Crespo, I proudly serve as the executive director of the Hispanic Alliance, a membership organization consisting of twenty-two organizational members who provide a wide array of services to Latinos throughout the region. Additionally, we enjoy the support of fifteen individual members who are committed advocates of fair and equitable treatment to all persons, with a special emphasis on Latinos.

In America, our constitution and our society were influenced by the idea of a social contract. This concept also influenced the American and French Revolutions.

Thomas Hobbes argued that the absolute power of the sovereign is justified by a hypothetical social contract in which the people agree to obey him (authority) in all matters, in return for a guarantee of peace and security, which they lack in the warlike “state of nature” posited to exist before the contract is made.

John Locke believed that rulers (authority) also were obliged to protect private property and the right to freedom of thought, speech, and worship.

Rousseau held that in the state of nature, people are unwarlike but also undeveloped in reasoning and morality; in surrendering their individual

freedom, they acquire political liberty and civil rights within a system of laws based on the “general will” of the governed.

It is our contention, that the historical ethos and cultural underpinnings of most police departments have not given enough credence for a structured and deliberate discussion on police doctrine. Public institutions should take a lesson the corporate and non-profit worlds, were they conduct strategy sessions and enter into evaluative processes, to assure they enjoy continued success with their customers and clients and program participants.

In the public arena, entrenched bureaucracy, collective bargaining agreements, politics and outside financial influences hinder a polemic yet meaningful discourse to call into question, the philosophical foundation of how police response to citizens’ concerns for assistance and intervention.

Yes, the police department’s successful efforts to present a softer and kinder image through Thanksgiving turkey giveaways, sock and underwear distributions, toys for tots and many other events are effective for the moment. These efforts do little to change the caricature of beafy, over-zealous, gun slinging cops responding to a call in reactionary modes, mostly in economically and socially marginalized Black and Latino communities, and, as we’ve seen recently, with very tragic consequences.

The Hispanic Alliance supports and recommends that mandates an outside agency review fatalities.

1. Recognize that police officers suffer from PTSD in many forms.
2. CPD must support the availability and accessibility for mental health services for all officers, but in particular for those who are involved in shootings. We as a community must remove the stigma of mental health needs, particularly in a macho culture environment.
3. An understanding of Spanish and the cultural nuances of Latinos. A one page reference sheet on commonly used words and phrases, with the names and telephone numbers of organizations that can assist in communication between the officer and the citizen should become part of the items in police vehicles to be used by officers when necessary.
4. Officers must be trained in the folkways, idioms and folkways of the communities to which they are assigned.
5. Officers must be trained to identify possible physical disabilities in the citizens they interact with.
6. The Mayor's office should create a meaningful, sustainable environment that aggressively supports all with community stakeholders, to assure that all parties have a safe platform for regular and honest discussion.
7. CDP and the Mayor's office must create a comprehensive and transparent report that highlights the number of lives saved or tragedies avoided.
8. I concur with Mayor Jackson that our local criminal justice system must be involved in the work that lies before us. And, our influential corporate community as well.

In conclusion, there is much talk of Cleveland's renaissance these days, we see drawings, renditions and construction that speak to positioning our City as a world class destination place. It's up to us to determine if that renaissance will benefit all who signed on to the social contract or a selected few.

Respectfully submitted;

Juan Molina Crespo, January 28, 2015