

President's Task force report

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President's task for report

In response to the murder of Michael brown and the unrest and tensions between communities and their policing forces, President Barack Obama Signed an executive order instituting the task force on 21st century policing. This task force was to provide recommendations on how policing practices and policies could bring about improved crime reduction while building public trust. Focusing on 6 pillars and a variety of recommendations within those pillars. The focus of this paper will be of a particular few recommendations that I feel have promise. These individual recommendations may not reflect which pillars as a whole have the most promise but instead have stable footing upon which they can stand themselves. Within these recommendations I will attempt to find evidence of policy change or research that shows whether the implementation has been effective within jurisdictions that have taken steps towards these recommendations. Where this fails though I will use what any individual knows best for argumentation; their own beliefs and empirical evidence.

I've chosen three recommendations from three of the six pillars. The first recommendation being 5.11 : "The federal government as well as state and local agencies should encourage and incentivize higher education for law enforcement officers" . The second recommendation 4.6: "Communities should adopt polices and programs that address the needs of children and youth most at risk for crime or violence and reduce aggressive law enforcement tactics that stigmatize youth and marginalize their participation in schools and communities", and the third recommendation 3.6: "The federal government should support the development of new

“less than lethal” technology to help control combative suspects”. Again I have chosen these recommendations not because the pillars which they are apart of are necessarily the strongest pillars for building a relationship between the communities in which police officers serve but instead because these individual recommendations have merit in themselves for doing so.

The first recommendation(5.11) is one that regardless of individual improvement of quality's and traits has been recognized to be beneficial to all populations. “A nation's brilliance and ability to prosper is directly dependent upon its people's edification. Without continuing to open one's mind and allowing oneself to be taught, a person becomes stagnant, ignorant, and frozen in time.”. (Mackey, K. ,Spring, 2013). A key word from this quote is edification; defined as the improvement of a person morally or/and intellectually. In improving relations between communities and those public servants , education is paramount. Police officers are required to interact with communities full of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and thus need a better understanding of those intricacies and the critical thinking skills that develop from a higher education to deal with such complexities. An improved social view of these police officers is characterized by their individual behaviors and interactions. So the question is does a police officers education effect their behavior? There is evidence to suggest so. Researchers in 2001 found a correlation between education and misconduct. (Lersch, K.M., Kunzman, L.L. ,2001). In this research officers who did not have an increased education where found to have more complaints than their educated peers. Ultimately the need for further research is needed but an increasingly educated society both civilians and those that serve them is an improved society.

“We cannot always build a future for our youth, but we can always build our youth for the future.” A quote by FDR and one particularly well suited for recommendation 4.6. In an

attempt to negate any potential bias I must say this is a recommendation that hits close to home.

As an individual who grew up in both DCFS and JJS custody the passion for protecting the youth

who are treated as second hand members and thus are not given the same opportunities to

develop and grow as their contemporaries is of cosmic importance. Using the word

“contemporaries” may seem odd at first glance but it is a justified word in this situation where

“peer’s” does not fit, the reason being those that are judged as less and not given the same

opportunities are set aside in society and exists only in the same time. These individuals these

children are judged and they take it to heart. When told repeatedly and treated in such a way over

time their actions grow to match that judgment. Children are susceptible to their environment in

a time before they themselves have discovered their individuality. Those that are especially

susceptible based on their environment need special attention and guidance that will potentially

mold them into productive members of society and not instead cast them in iron with false

judgments as delinquents. In accordance with the task forces recommendation a follow up the

Police-Youth engagement (International Association of Chiefs of Police. 2018. Police-Youth

Engagement) lists a variety of programs aimed at reducing youth crime and the advent of youth

to adult offenders. However simple google results show a lot of research on a variety of factors

and concerns with youth offenders and development but there is not enough current research on

how these programs effect the youths who participate. In part this is because it is a longterm

result we are looking for. It is obvious that there are programs in place to help disadvantaged

youths but as for what will help them best it is something that has remained to be seen.

Recommendation 3.6 federal research into the development of less than lethal weapons might need an explanation as to why this is important for community-police relationships.

Suffice it to say community relations will always be stressed when individuals within those communities are previously injured and leave the nuances there. New research has shown that less than lethal weapons decrease injuries for both offenders and the corresponding police officers (Phillip .B , May 2011) . It should be obvious that less injuries even if the amount of confrontations it self is not reduced has the potential to improve community relations.

In conclusion while there is a variety of ground to stand upon in the improvement of the relationship with police officers and the communities they serve, an increase in education in all parties , shaping the future of the youths of those communities, and developing better tools for the job of a guardian and not that of a soldier are components in a mixture that could give rigidity while maintaining the flexibility to improve modern policing.

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