



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS UNVEILS COMMUNITY POLICING RECOMMENDATIONS

Mayors and Police Chiefs Issue Report, Calling for Outside Investigators For Police-Involved Shootings

Washington, D.C. – Under the leadership of U.S. Conference of Mayors President and Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson, the nation's mayors today released their recommendations on improving community policing, following a four-month review of policies and best practices nationwide.

The recommendations were unveiled by Gary (IN) Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, who chairs the USCM Working Group of Mayors and Police Chiefs, during the Conference's 83rd Winter Meeting at the Capitol Hilton in a morning session titled "Strengthening Community Policing in the 21st Century."

Participants in today's session included Mayor Freeman-Wilson, Director of White House Intergovernmental Affairs Jerry E. Abramson; Philadelphia Police Commissioner and President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Co-Chair Charles Ramsey; George Mason University Professor and President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing Co-Chair Laurie Robinson; and U.S. Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing Services Office Director and Task Force Executive Director Ronald L. Davis. The session was moderated by Mayor Johnson and included an open question and answer period with hundreds of mayors in the audience.

The Conference's working group was formed following the tragedy in Ferguson and an October meeting in Little Rock, AR where over 100 mayors and police chiefs met at the William J. Clinton Center in Little Rock, AR to discuss different community-policing strategies, lessons to be learned from the situation in Ferguson and ways to build trust between law enforcement and city officials. The group was charged with developing a series of recommendations for local and national actions intended to improve policing in America.

The full report of recommendations, which will inform the work of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, is available at www.usmayors.org, but topic areas of focus are as follows:

1. Building police-community trust (interacting with the community to develop relationships);
2. Improving police department practices (officer recruitment, training and supervision);
3. Assuring timely and accurate communications (having procedures already in place, using social media);
4. Conducting independent investigations (to increase public confidence);
5. Addressing racial and economic disparities (using proven best practices and preventive measures for youth);
6. Providing national leadership (promoting mayor and police-chief relationships, federal financial support for more hiring and training).

During today's session, Johnson said, "Mayors stand at the crossroads of their communities. We are the leaders best positioned to bridge the gaps in trust and understanding our residents, all of whom want what is best for our cities." Johnson also participated in the first public listening session of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing on January 13 in Washington, D.C.

Commenting on the work of the USCM Working Group, Mayor Freeman-Wilson said, "Mayors and police chiefs know full well that effective community policing is practiced in a constitutional manner by many police departments, and the vast majority of police officers have developed trusting relationships with the communities they serve. But, we also know there ought to be full confidence with the

public in our law enforcement. ... If our quest is to achieve a sense of justice in our communities, we have a responsibility to address these issues whenever there is a police-involved death. ... This an opportunity for mayors to lead and we can choose to navigate around these issues, or we can create a new landscape in our communities to create a better future for our children.”

Of the mayors’ recommendations, Chief Ramsey said, “We will use this document to help us in our work moving forward. We need the support of the nation’s mayors to help us meet our deadline.” The Task Force’s report to President Obama is expected by March 2, 2015.

Executive Director Davis spoke of his office’s on-going work with The USCM saying, “The COPS office is tasked with supporting the work of the President’s Task Force. We know that trust is key to public safety and requires strong relationships. It is a great honor to serve in this capacity and we appreciate the work of the nation’s mayors.”

During the Winter Meeting, mayors also released the public safety findings results of a Zogby poll, which surveyed public perceptions of local, state and federal government officials in late December. The poll (at usmayors.org) found that:

- On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being no trust of local governments to provide public safety and 5 being the highest trust, 54% of Americans polled gave a “trust” score of 4 – 5, while only 19% gave a 1 – 2.
- Cities’ police departments received even higher ratings in protecting the safety and rights of minorities —62% high and 32% low. This was something—to varying degrees—that all races and ideologies agree upon by majorities, though, minorities’ ratings are lower. Whites offer a 66% high to 29% low performance for the police; Hispanics 60% to 34% and African Americans 50% to 43%. Liberals offer 54% to 39%; conservatives 73% to 24%; and moderates 60% to 35%.

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are nearly 1400 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Like us on Facebook at facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.