

Broward Sheriff's Office
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Pride in Service with Integrity

October 13, 2010

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
United States Senate
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, DC 20510-6275

Dear Senator Leahy:

Please find enclosed responses to the questions Senator Tom Coburn, M.D. and Senator Amy Klobuchar had following my testimony at the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs hearing entitled "Crimes Against America's Homeless: Is the Violence Growing?".

As requested, an electronic version was sent to Ms. Julia Gagne. If you require any additional information, please feel free to contact me at 954.849.6422.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Wierzbicki", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Richard Wierzbicki, Commander
Hate Crimes / Anti Bias Task Force

RW/lis
Enclosure

Written Questions of Senator Tom Coburn, M.D.
Richard Wierzbicki, Commander, Broward County Sheriff's Office
U.S. Senate committee on the Judiciary
September 29, 2010

- Q. In your testimony, you said that, “[w]hen the homeless population is let out of national hate crime data collection and reporting, we fail in our responsibility to protect all Americans equally.” In your view, do we also fail in that responsibility by not collecting data on individuals who are victims of crime because they are members of the military? Or pregnant? Or members of a certain political party? If not, why not?
- A. No, under the categories you have listed, we do not fail in our responsibility to protect all Americans equally. In my 28 years as a law enforcement officer, protecting the citizens of the State of Florida and Broward County, I have not experienced bias motivated hate directed towards the victims of crimes from the groups you have listed.

Crimes Against America's Homeless: Is the Violence Growing?

September 29, 2010

Questions for the Record from Senator Amy Klobuchar

*Questions for Richard Wierzbicki, Commander, Hate Crimes/Anti-Bias Task Force,
Broward County Florida Sheriff's Office*

- Q. Your written testimony discusses the importance of raising law enforcement awareness regarding crimes against the homeless, and mentions that St. Petersburg College is developing a course that will help law enforcement work with homeless individuals to encourage them to report crimes. Can you describe the kind of specialized training you think may be helpful for law enforcement regarding crimes against the homeless?
- A. Some of the areas of training that may be beneficial for law enforcement officers in dealing with the homeless community are:
- Defining “homelessness”
 - Law enforcement, business and community response to the homelessness issue
 - Law Enforcement’s safety concerns when dealing with the homeless population
 - Legal issues – what can and cannot be done
 - Homelessness task forces around the country – best practices and case studies
 - Strategies to reduce homelessness
 - Services available to the community, homeless, law enforcement and social/community organizations
- Q. Your written testimony mentions the importance of data collection on hate crimes because it has allowed you to target your response to hate crimes – for example, focusing on religious institutions that were frequently the subjects of hateful vandalism. What kind of data collection is done by the Florida Attorney General – and how are the data collection requirements implemented at the local level? How did you target your response as a result?
- A. The Florida Attorney General’s Annual Hate Crimes Report shows the number of Hate Crimes committed against persons, but also the nature of the factors motivating the offenses. This includes Hate Crimes motivated by a person’s race, color, ancestry, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, homeless status, mental or physical disability or advanced age of the victim. These include crimes like homicide, robbery, sexual assault, assault, battery and kidnapping. The Annual hate Crimes Report also collects data on crimes against property such as vandalism, burglary and arson. The data is submitted to the Florida Attorney

U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary

September 29, 2010

Page 2

General's Office via individual law enforcement agencies throughout the State of Florida. The data is collected by the individual agencies through their Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) information system and sent to the Attorney General's Office. After the Report is compiled, it is sent to the law enforcement agencies throughout the State. At the Broward County Sheriff's Office, any report labeled a Hate Crime is sent to our Task Force and mapped so we can see any patterns developing and prepare an appropriate response.