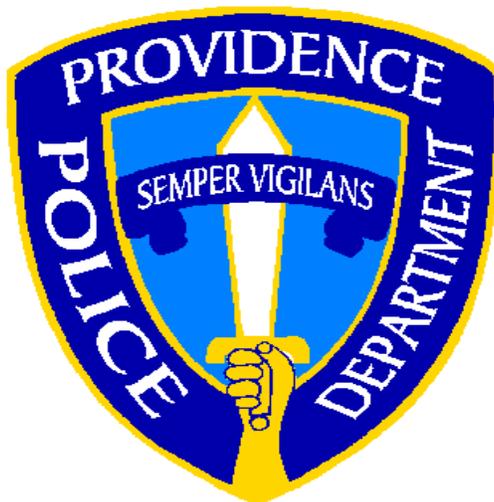


**SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
ENCOURAGING INNOVATIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE
CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY AND EXHIBITS
BY
COLONEL DEAN M. ESSERMAN
CHIEF OF POLICE
PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND**



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GOOD MORNING MR. CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE MEMBERS, MY NAME IS DEAN ESSERMAN AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY BEFORE YOUR COMMITTEE. I SIT HERE IN FRONT OF YOU TODAY AS ONE OF AMERICA'S POLICE CHIEFS. I HAVE BEEN THE CHIEF OF POLICE OF THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE FOR SEVEN YEARS. PROVIDENCE IS THE CAPITOL OF RHODE ISLAND AND THE SECOND LARGEST CITY IN NEW ENGLAND. THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE PROPER ENCOMPASSES A VERY HIGH CONCENTRATION OF OUR METROPOLITAN AREA'S RESIDENTS LIVING IN POVERTY; WE ARE IN FACT AMONG THE TOP FIVE POOREST CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES FOR CHILDREN, AND FOR TOO LONG WE WERE ALSO A CITY THAT SAW TOO MUCH VIOLENCE, ESPECIALLY VIOLENCE AMONG OUR YOUNG, AMONG OUR CHILDREN.

I AM VERY PROUD TO SAY THAT THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT WHO I PROUDLY REPRESENT TODAY, "PROVIDENCE'S FINEST" HAVE BEEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE TURNING THE TIDE. FOR MORE THAN SEVEN YEARS CRIME HAS BEEN GOING DOWN IN PROVIDENCE. LED BY AN ENERGETIC AND REFORM-MINDED MAYOR, DAVID CICILLINE, THE PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS DONE MORE THAN TRANSFORM ITS STRATEGIES AND TACTICS. THE DEPARTMENT HAS UNDERGONE EXTENSIVE REENGINEERING AND HAS FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED THE WAY IT THINKS ABOUT ITSELF AND ITS WORK.

IN THE PAST, THE DEPARTMENT SAW ITSELF LIKE MANY. POLICE WERE LIKE ARMED REFEREES WHO KEPT AN AUTHORITATIVE DISTANCE – TO THE

POINT OF BEING ALMOST ANONYMOUS – WHILE TRYING TO MAINTAIN ORDER IN A COMMUNITY THAT WAS NOT THEIR OWN.

I WAS RECRUITED BY THE MAYOR TO CHANGE THAT. I WAS ASKED TO BRING THE COMMUNITY POLICING PHILOSOPHY TO PROVIDENCE. COMMUNITY POLICING MEANS BECOMING ENMESHED IN THE COMMUNITY. OUR IMPROVEMENT AS A POLICE DEPARTMENT HAS DIRECTLY COINCIDED WITH OUR ABILITY TO MAKE THAT TRANSFORMATION. WE ARE AS PROFESSIONAL AS ANY POLICE DEPARTMENT IN THE COUNTRY, BUT WE REJECT THE IDEA OF BEING ANONYMOUS REFEREES. WE ARE PART OF THE COMMUNITY.

IN OUR REENGINEERING EFFORTS, WE HAVE ADOPTED THE LESSONS LEARNED OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES IN AMERICAN POLICING OF WHAT WORKS. FIRST, WE HAVE EMBRACED AND INSTITUTED COMMUNITY POLICING, DECENTRALIZING THE DEPARTMENT, AND DIVIDING THE CITY INTO NEIGHBORHOOD POLICE DISTRICTS. EACH DISTRICT HAS A COMMUNITY DONATED NEIGHBORHOOD SUBSTATION OFFICE AND A COMMANDER ACCOUNTABLE TO THE RESIDENTS AND TO THE DEPARTMENT.

SECOND, THE MANAGEMENT TOOL ADOPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO OVERSEE OUR NEWLY DECENTRALIZED OPERATIONS IS WEEKLY DETECTIVE AND COMMAND STAFF MEETINGS DRIVEN BY TIMELY AND ACCURATE CRIME STATISTICS (OFTEN KNOWN AS THE NEW YORK CITY COMPSTAT MODEL). ACCOUNTABILITY IS EMPHASIZED BY DETECTIVE AND PATROL SUPERVISORS GATHERING WEEKLY TO REVIEW INCIDENTS, EVENTS, COORDINATE ACTIVITIES,

AND SHARE CRITICAL INFORMATION. MOREOVER, THE DEPARTMENT HAS EMBRACED THE IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES EMBODIED IN PROFESSOR KELLING'S WORK, WELL KNOWN AS "BROKEN WINDOWS." WE FOCUS OUR RESOURCES ON SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIMES AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE OFFENSES WITH EQUAL EFFORTS.

THE RESULTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS CRIME IS DOWN 34%. THIS REPRESENTS THE LOWEST LEVEL IN MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS. AS IMPORTANTLY, THERE IS A STRONG AND GROWING SENSE OF TRUST AND PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE POLICE DEPARTMENT. WHEN WE FORM COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS, WE ARE NOT JUST MEETING, WE ARE NOT JUST VISITING, WE ARE STAYING.

I TAKE THE TIME TO TELL THIS STORY SO THAT WE DO NOT ABANDON WHAT WORKS BUT RATHER BUILD ON IT AS WE SEEK OUT INNOVATIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE.

IT IS IN THESE TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES THAT OUR CITY, LIKE SO MANY COMMUNITIES ACROSS OUR COUNTRY HAVE BEEN SEVERELY TESTED. THESE TIMES CAUSE US TO SEEK OUT THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGIES AND TO INVEST IN WHAT WE KNOW MAKES A DIFFERENCE. AND SO, I AM HERE TO TELL YOU TODAY THAT COPS COUNT, THAT YOUR INVESTMENT IN LOCAL POLICING HAS MADE A DIFFERENCE. THAT THE FRAMEWORK OF COMMUNITY POLICING WORKS, AMERICA'S POLICE NO LONGER WORK ALONE, THEY WORK IN PARTNERSHIP:

- IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, WHETHER CONDUCTING RESEARCH OR UNDERSTANDING BEST PRACTICES THROUGH THE DIFFERENT ARMS OF THE OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS, OR TARGETING OFFENDERS THROUGH THE LOCAL U.S. ATTORNEY’S OFFICES AND THE FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES.
- IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE RHODE ISLAND LOCAL INITIATIVE SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC) TO TRANSFORM DISTRESSED NEIGHBORHOODS INTO VIBRANT AND HEALTHY PLACES. WE WORK WITH OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS ENCOURAGING HOME OWNERSHIP AND PROVIDING CAPITAL INVESTMENT FOR REAL ESTATE PROJECTS. THE PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE LISC SPONSORED COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF PERSISTENT CRIME, DISORDER, AND FEAR. THE DEPARTMENT RECEIVED THREE METLIFE FOUNDATION COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARDS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS.
- IN PARTNESHIP WITH THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF NONVIOLENCE. PURSUING AN INITIATIVE FIRST BORN IN BOSTON IN THE 1990s, INSTITUTE STAFF, KNOWN AS STREET WORKERS ARE CERTIFIED NONVIOLENCE TRAINERS AND VETERANS OF LIFE ON THE STREET – OFTEN FORMER GANG MEMBERS – TEACH THE PRINCIPLES OF NONVIOLENCE DEVELOPED BY DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. FOR RECONCILING CONFLICT. STREET WORKERS INTERVENE IN POTENTIALLY VIOLENT SITUATIONS, OFFERING MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

SERVICES, AND HELP PREVENT RETALIATION OF COMMUNITY VIOLENCE BY OFFERING NONVIOLENT SOLUTIONS. STREET WORKERS VISIT SHOOTING SCENES AND EMERGENCY ROOMS IN AN EFFORT TO QUICKLY STEM-OFF RETALIATION. STREET WORKERS OFFER SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY-BASED CRISIS INTERVENTION, MEDIATION, AND SERVE AS MENTORS TO AT-RISK YOUTH. THE PROVIDENCE POLICE DEPARTMENT AND THE STREET WORKERS WORK IN TANDEM TO ESTABLISH A DIALOGUE WITH SOME OF THE MOST VIOLENT CITY COMBATANTS IN REAL OR PERCEIVED DISPUTES. STREET WORKERS APPEAR IN "FULL FORCE" IN TIME OF CRISIS AND IN OPEN DISPUTES. BY WORKING ALL "HOT-SPOTS," THE STREET WORKERS ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE FEUDING SIDES AND ARE EQUIPPED TO ASSIST IN PARTICULAR CASES.

- IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FAMILY SERVICE OF RHODE ISLAND WHICH IS THE OLDEST AND LARGEST NON-PROFIT HUMAN SERVICE AGENCY IN RHODE ISLAND TO REPLICATE AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY POLICING-CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF POLICE AND MENTAL-HEALTH CLINICIANS FIRST PIONEERED BY THE YALE CHILD STUDY CENTER AND THE NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT POLICE DEPARTMENT IN 1992. TOGETHER, WE CREATED A "POLICE GO TEAM" IN WHICH A TRAINED SOCIAL SERVICE CLINICIAN IS CALLED TO A CRIME SCENE TO TREAT VICTIMS AS WELL AS PROVIDE FOLLOW-UP SERVICES TO THE VICTIM, THE VICTIM'S FAMILY, AND THE POLICE OFFICERS RESPONDING TO THE SCENE. THESE

CLINICIANS RIDE IN PATROL CARS EVERY NIGHT AS PARTNERS WITH OFFICERS ON ACTIVE PATROL.

- IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND'S DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION WHERE PROBATION OFFICERS ARE ASSIGNED TO NEIGHBORHOOD POLICE DISTRICT OFFICES AND THEIR CASELOAD IS SPECIFIC TO THAT NEIGHBORHOOD. THEY SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE RETURNING TO THE COMMUNITY, PARTICIPATE IN MEET AND GREET ORIENTATION MEETINGS, AND PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED OVERSIGHT AND DIRECTION TO THOSE RETURNING TO THE COMMUNITY.
- AND FINALLY, IN 2006, WITH THE NATIONAL AND RHODE ISLAND URBAN LEAGUES WHO APPROACHED THE DEPARTMENT ABOUT WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT A DRUG MARKET INTERVENTION INITIATIVE IN THE LOCKWOOD PLAZA NEIGHBORHOOD OF PROVIDENCE. THE DRUG MARKET INTERVENTION INITIATIVE IS BASED ON THE INITIAL WORK OF JOHN JAY PROFESSOR DAVID KENNEDY IN HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA.

I AM A CHARTER AND EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES CREATED BY JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK. THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR SAFE COMMUNITIES IS A COALITION OF POLICE CHIEFS, PROSECUTORS, COMMUNITY LEADERS, SERVICE PROVIDERS, MAYORS, STREET WORKERS, SCHOLARS AND OTHERS CONCERNED ABOUT THE IMPACT OF CRIME AND CURRENT CRIME POLICIES ON COMMUNITIES. AS A MAJOR CITY CHIEF, I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT THIS IS WHERE THE COUNTRY NEEDS TO GO ON THESE ISSUES.

MANY OF THE INITIATIVES THAT I HAVE OUTLINED TODAY, AND OTHERS THAT TIME DOES NOT PERMIT, WERE BORN FROM FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH AND STARTED WITH FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS FROM THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE, THE BUREAU OF JUSTICE ASSISTANCE, AND SPECIFICALLY, PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS AND EDWARD BYRNE MEMORIAL JUSTICE ASSISTANCE GRANT FUNDS.

THESE INVESTMENTS DIRECTED BY CONGRESS IN LOCAL POLICING MAKE A DIFFERENCE. THEY BRING DOLLARS BACK TO THE NEIGHBORHOODS OF OUR MANY COMMUNITIES AND TO THOSE WHO WORK AND LIVE IN THEM.

THE FUTURE OF INNOVATIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGIES MUST BE FOCUSED ON THE TWIN PILLARS OF PREVENTION AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY. THE INVESTMENT IN CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND NEIGHBORHOODS IMPACTS CRIME AND VIOLENCE. IT IS COST-EFFECTIVE, IT IS WELL RESEARCHED, AND IT IS RIGHT.

AN INCREASED INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, SO LONG AS THE INVESTMENT IN TECHNOLOGY DOES NOT REPLACE THE WORKERS IN THE FIELD, BUT SUPPORTS AND AUGMENTS THEM. THE WORKING OFFICER ON THE STREET IS THE FACE OF AMERICA'S POLICE DEPARTMENTS. THE WORKING OFFICER IS THE FACE OF THE WORKING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES. THE TECHNOLOGY THAT CAN BE DEVELOPED TO ENHANCE EVERMORE TIMELY AND ACCURATE INFORMATION, WHETHER REACTIVE OR PREDICTIVE MUST BE DELIVERED TO

THE OFFICERS ON OUR BEATS. ONLY IF IT IS RELEVANT AND HELPFUL IN THE DAY-TO-DAY WORK OF AMERICA'S FRONT LINE POLICE OFFICERS WILL IT MAKE THE REAL DIFFERENCE.

THE FUTURE OF INNOVATIVE AND COST-EFFECTIVE CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGIES BUILDS ON WHAT WE KNOW WORKS, AND WHO WE ENTRUST TO BE DOING THE WORK.

WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, TODAY'S POLICE DEPARTMENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF OUR CITIZENS OF OUR RESPECTIVE COMMUNITIES. GOOD POLICING THAT IS WELL DESIGNED AND WELL MANAGED SHOULD BE EMBRACED AND SUPPORTED. IT WILL SAVE LIVES, AND STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES. MR. CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS, I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY HERE TODAY, AND I AM AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS. THANK YOU.

EXHIBITS

1. Providence Part I Crime Charts
2. Providence Police Department receives 1st Place MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award for Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative
3. National Network for Safe Communities Brochure
4. *Annuals of Crime: Don't Shoot, A Radical Approach to the Problem of Gang Violence*, by John Seabrook. The New Yorker, June 22, 2009.
5. Providence Police Department & Family Service of RI, Police-Social Work Partnership Fact Sheet
6. Providence Police Department and Family Service of RI Partnership article by Ellen Liberman
7. Special Strategy Award: Gang Prevention & Youth Safety, Innovative Solutions to Youth Violence. *Institute for the Study & Practice of Nonviolence and the Providence Police Department Partnership*
8. Providence Journal news article entitled "Closing 'crack highway,'" highlighting the Lockwood Drug Market Intervention Initiative. March 11, 2007.
9. Providence Journal news article entitled "Police, residents work to lower crime at Providence's troubled Chad Brown project." January 10, 2010.
10. Providence Journal news article entitled "Providence police supervisors issued BlackBerry smartphones." December 2, 2009.