

**Statement of Chief John Coyle**  
**Egg Harbor Township Police Department**  
**President, New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police**  
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Thank you, Chairman Johnson and members of the Committee. I appreciate this opportunity to share some thoughts on the topics under consideration by the Committee. I have attempted to structure my remarks as a response to the issues identified in the memo from the Committee.

From the perspective of a Chief of Police, sound policing standards are the foundation for providing fair and professional law enforcement to the communities we serve. These standards include the selection of qualified personnel, and sound policy and procedures. Since the inception of modern law enforcement, the police have been held accountable to two entities: the public they serve and the laws and oaths of their office. Law enforcement officers are constantly reminded of the serious ethical nature of their calling. Therefore when a young, idealistic person becomes a police officer, almost certainly he or she will be required to swear an oath to uphold the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics. The Code is important to policing, contributing to its image as a profession and engendering self-respect among the officers. Most important, the Code proclaims to the public a willingness to uphold certain standards of behavior.

**Police Officer Selection**

Policing is a labor-intensive service industry in which 85 to 90 percent of its monetary expenditures are devoted to personnel costs. Therefore, the most significant investment police agencies make is in the recruiting, testing, selecting, and training of personnel.

Recruiting an adequate pool of applicants is an extremely important facet of the policing hiring process. Former Attorney General, Janet Reno once stated that the police have the most difficult job in America. This is still true today. This underscores the need for police agencies to attempt to attract individuals who possess certain minimal qualifications and justify further effort and expenditures in the testing process.

One of the most enduring and controversial issues in policing is whether police officers benefit from high education. Advocates maintain that college education will improve the quality of policing, in part by making officers more tolerant of people who are different from themselves. In this view, educated officers are in general more professional, communicate better with citizens, are better decision makers, and have better written and verbal skills. There is an abundance of empirical evidence indicating that college-educated police officers make better police officers. Studies have determined that college-educated police officers have significantly fewer founded citizen complaints than their non-college-educated counterparts. Although several law enforcement agencies in New Jersey now require some level of college education for entry positions, many agencies only require High School education or its equivalency. New Jersey Statutes 40:A14-22 outlines the general qualifications of members of police department, and does not set forth minimum educational requirements. In my personnel opinion, legislators should explore the possibility of setting mandatory education levels for police candidates. I would suggest that the level for entry should be a minimum of 64 credits from an accredited college or university.

In our state, we have in effect two separate systems for selecting police officers. For not-quite

half of our local police agencies, the Department of Personnel rules – usually referred to as “Civil Service” – apply. Other local agencies hire and promote under the rules set out in Title 40A of our statutes, as well as local ordinances. In general, applicants are be required to undergo written examinations, job related physical agility testing, psychological screening, medical and drug screening, and thorough background investigations. The majority of police agencies in New Jersey currently complete these steps.

Many agencies throughout the United States use Polygraph Examination in their selection process. Although the polygraph examination has its limitations, it is still considered by many police executives as an important aspect of the selection process, particularly when used after the psychological examination and before the charter investigation. Unfortunately, New Jersey Criminal Code makes it a crime for police executives to subject applicants to a polygraph examination.

I would like to add a final point on this topic. I know that I speak for all of my colleagues when I stress the importance of officer selection to the quality of police services rendered to the community. This is why our Association inaugurated a police officer entry-level examination program back in 1945, and why we continue to provide this service to police agencies around the state. But we, as police chiefs, can only do so much. The final decision on all police officer hires – and promotions, for that matter – lie with the local elected officials. No police officer hires himself or herself. Our local elected officials need to be continually reminded that the quality of the officers they hire and promote will be reflected on the streets and in the neighborhoods of their communities.

## **Training**

The police academy is a major point in the career of the officer-to-be; for some agencies, academy training provides the bulk of the formal training that the officer will acquire during his or her career. The academy also plays a significant role in shaping the officer's attitudes and is the beginning point for the occupational socialization of the officer. The New Jersey Police Training Commission provides oversight and certification for all of the police academies in New Jersey. New Jersey does an excellent job in preparing our officers to protect and serve. However, once a police officer graduates from the police academy there are no requirements (other than firearms qualifications and few other mandatory in-service matters) for maintaining that certification. There are several States that require officers to complete mandatory training to maintain their certification.

## **In-Service Training**

Agency in-service training varies throughout the State of New Jersey. Some Counties conduct in-service training at their academies on topics such as Legal Updates, Use of Force, Police Vehicle Pursuits, Domestic Violence Procedures, and CPR. Other agencies conduct their training in-house.

In 2005, Attorney General Directive 2005-1, established an official statewide policy defining and prohibiting the practice of racially-influenced policing. The directive required that every law enforcement agency develop a policy that prohibited all sworn officers and civilian employees of the agency from engaging in or tolerating any practice or act constituting racially-influenced

policing. Furthermore, every police officer in the State of New Jersey was required to participate in the training program developed by the Division of Criminal Justice. *It should be noted that the training document was developed at the request of New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police.*

The Police Academies throughout New Jersey offer a variety of specialized training programs to include Methods of Instruction, Interview Techniques, Criminal Investigation, Accident Investigation, Police Supervision, etc.

The New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police offers several training programs, educational seminars and professional development classes. Among other programs, the NJSACOP conducts first line supervisory training and advanced leadership training.

The highest-level leadership training program that we offer was developed in 1993, in conjunction with the staff of the Behavioral Science Unit at the United States Military Academy at West Point. I am proud to say that this is one of the most prestigious and academically rigorous police executive leadership programs in the nation.

Our Association also provides training programs on Police Ethics and Traffic Stop Procedures, Sexual Harassment in the Public Safety Workplace, Performance Evaluation, and many other timely and important programs. The New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police also offers a voluntary Certified Chief Law Enforcement Executive Certification for those Chief Executives that have demonstrated through training, education and community involvement that they meet

the qualifications.

### **Organizations**

The basic foundation of a professional law enforcement organization is the establishment of sound policies and procedures. These policies and procedures must be developed based upon proven police practices, must be kept current, and must be adhered to by all members of the organization.

The Law Enforcement Accreditation Process is a proven modern management tool that presents an agency's Chief Executive Officer with a blueprint that promotes the efficient use of resources and improves service delivery - regardless of the size, geographic location, or functional responsibilities of the agency.

In 2002, the New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police entered into an alliance with the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The alliance permits the New Jersey Accreditation Commission the authority to use national CALEA Standards. By way of brief background, CALEA was founded as a consortium of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the Police Executive Research Forum.

The Accreditation program requires the agency to conduct a self-assessment by complying with applicable standards and developing proofs of compliance. After the self-assessment the agency must schedule an on-site assessment which is conducted by outside assessors who are contracted

by the Accreditation Commission. The Commission Assessors reports back to the Commission with their findings. Once the agency is awarded accreditation, the agency must maintain compliance with the applicable standards. On-site Assessments are conducted by the Commission every three years. The agency receiving Accreditation is required to submit an annual report, due by its anniversary date each year. The report includes a summary of the agency's accreditation maintenance experience for the preceding year and a declaration of continued compliance with applicable standards.

Of particular interest to the Committee is that the New Jersey Accreditation Commission and CALEA Standards govern Bias-based Profiling, Use of Force, and Internal Affairs Procedures.

Accreditation us a valuable tool in many ways. It requires the agency to adhere to the highest and most current professional standards. It forces the agency to take a good, long hard look at itself and how it operates. It mandates a full and complete system of policies and procedures and written directives. It holds the agency accountable and requires transparency and opens the agency to outside scrutiny.

### **Early Warning Systems**

The Attorney General's Guidelines on Internal Affairs requires that all Law Enforcement Agencies investigate all complaints received by the department. This naturally includes complaints of biased-policing. The County Prosecutor requires that a copy of the complaint be forwarded to their office. The Prosecutor, as Chief Law Enforcement Officer in the county, may take over the investigation, conduct a cooperative investigation, or require reports be forwarded

to their office at the conclusion of the investigation. Additionally, a quarterly and annual report is required to be submitted to the Prosecutor. This report is an analysis of activities that is intended to identify any trends or any other problems that may be developing. The person assigned to the Internal Affairs function is required to report directly to the Chief of Police.

The Attorney General's Guidelines on the Use of Force requires that each incident involving the use of force be documented on a report specifically designed for that purpose. Incidents involving serious injury or death are required to be immediately reported to the County Prosecutor. Additionally, an analysis report is submitted to the County Prosecutor. This analysis is also used to identify trends or problems.

Early warning systems – or Early Intervention Systems, as they are sometimes called, are an area that the state can provide technical assistance and guidance to local departments. Such systems can be a powerful management tool and an aid to the professional management and leadership of law enforcement agencies of all sizes. Such systems are usually in the form of an electronic database, but can work even with paper files. Such systems capture pieces of information about officer behavior early on. Such information can include number and type of community complaints, use of sick leave, and number and type of use of force incidents. Such systems can be used to identify officers who maybe experiencing personal or professional problems that are manifesting themselves in unacceptable job performance. They can also be used to help target resources to the specific needs of the officer. An EIS can be used to assist in performance evaluations, assignment decisions, and accountability of supervisors, as well as identifying performance problems to avoid future inappropriate conduct. This is not only good



administration, but also proactive risk management. Catching problems early can minimize complaints and even avoid lawsuits. Just as important, such systems can be used to enhance and enrich the careers of the rank and file officer.

I would note that some sort of early warning or early identification system is used by many departments, but I would think that this presents an area where the state could play a very productive role in helping local agencies.

### **Equipment**

The In-Car Audio/Video System is an effective tool for capturing data. With current technology, the data captured on the video system is stored on a hard drive. The data is then electronically transferred to a server. There is no need for tapes or cassettes which require special procedures for retrieving the tapes from the camera, filing them into storage, and disposal. The data that is stored on the hard drive is viewable by those authorized. Policies governing the In-Car Audio/Video should assign responsibility for required random review of the data. Model policies and procedures in this regard could be developed at the state or county level and provided to local agencies. Likewise, funding assistance for acquiring the latest and best technology from the state would make it more feasible for more municipalities.

### **Data Collection**

Currently, data collection policies vary around the state. It is my understanding that some counties, by way of agreement between the County Prosecutor and the county police chiefs do, or in the past have, collected traffic stop data. For more specific information in this regard, I

would direct the Committee to the County Prosecutors.

There are a variety of computer programs for police computer aid dispatch and records management used in New Jersey. Some of these programs capture traffic stop data and performance data. However, to what degree I do not know. I believe that a survey of law enforcement agencies needs to be conducted to determine what programs are currently being utilized. In order to ensure complete compliance, I would again recommend go through the County Prosecutors.

The final point I would like to make is about community trust and the reputation of a police department. No one has a bigger interest in, a bigger stake in, or a more personal identification with, the reputation of a local police department than the Chief of Police. He or she is morally, ethically and legally responsible for the operations and the conduct of the department and its officers. Local police play a very unique role in this country. We are by and from our communities. Most of us spend our entire careers serving the people of one community. I know I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that we take the issues of police leadership, public safety, and community service very seriously.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today. I would be happy to take any questions that you or the members of the Committee may have.