



Law Enforcement

As in many other cities in the United States, there are no easy explanations for the rapid explosion of gun violence and homicides plaguing our area's neighborhoods. A common thread is evident. Gun violence is fueled by rampant unemployment and boredom due to lack of positive activities for youth, as well as robberies and disputes occurring over simple slights. Strategies and initiatives advocating gun violence reduction must be addressed immediately and will require unprecedented understanding and cooperation among all levels of the criminal justice system and the community. The public's perception and judgment of misconduct by some members of the area police bureaus is a serious concern, particularly police abuse of authority and a lack of just punishment for abusive behavior. Furthermore, a large proportion of the community continues to perceive that racial bias is inherent within the culture of area police bureaus.

Teamwork is essential in law enforcement activity, as well as "community policing" environments in which citizens, community groups and the police work together as equal partners to attack and solve this problem. Therefore, all levels of law enforcement should do the following:

- **Review** all existing police policies and procedures with a high level of input from community advisory coalitions or groups created with representation from the command staff or area police departments to identify options for improvement and evaluation.
- **Develop** a more racially balanced work force. Actively recruit and hire African Americans and Hispanics to the police force. Place community members on hiring boards.
- **Provide** training and exam preparation assistance for the police exam aimed at expanding the numbers of minority recruits to area police bureaus.
- **Challenge** state civil service laws, policies and practices that are discriminatory and which create barriers to the hiring of African Americans and other people of color within police, public safety and fire departments. The absence of racially balanced law enforcement agencies often contributes to the creation of tension and possible violence in the community.
- **Provide** police officers with sensitivity and cultural diversity training.
- **Insist** that police officers solicit information without being confrontational and generate voluntary compliance from law violators without resorting to physical force.
- **Give** greater authority to members of the Civilian Police Review Board to participate in investigations of alleged police misconduct, in the development of new standards of police conduct, and in the review and implementation of such new standards. Investigate other community-police relation advisory models from other cities.
- **Institute** better monitoring systems for the sales of all weapons, and create new and more effective systems that would strongly impact the sales of illegal firearms, especially assault weapons
- **Invest** as much money into rehabilitation as is invested in incarceration.

- **Encourage** more citizens to participate in the citizen's police academy to learn more about police operations, which would in turn foster better community relations.
- **Lobby** the political structure and law enforcement to change any laws that currently inhibit the employment, training, and educational opportunities for African Americans and other people of color.
- **Lobby** for laws that would allow the records of non-violent criminals to be expunged, either after completion of some criteria or after a short time period following release (one to two years).
- **Become** an integral part of the community by engaging in more positive communication with youth and parents. Develop better trust between the police, the youth and the community. Serve as positive role models for youth. Greet youth with help, not harassment.

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