

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Members of The Taskforce,

My name is Dr. Ron Schack. I reside in Manchester, CT. I am Managing Director of The Charter Oak Group, LLC. I am a researcher and policy analyst, my primary area of expertise being performance metrics and accountability.

The final report of President Obama's Task Force on 21st Century Policing serves as a great foundation for supporting police efforts with transparency and accountability in these difficult times. There are several recommendations in that report that require more development and exploration.

As a citizen, I want to emphasize I strongly support our police departments. Police officers are asked to put themselves in harm's way every day, often with very little training beyond the academy. Given all of the different kinds of training that police officers should regularly receive, including crisis intervention training, instruction in disease of addiction, training on implicit bias and cultural responsiveness, procedural justice, effective social interaction and, of course, use of force and tactical skills... the amount of time police officers spend training should be drastically increased. Not just from say, 24 hours per year to 50 hours per year....we need to radically rethink this and have officers training 4 hours per week or more. We have often heard that true expertise requires 10,000 hours of practice...don't we want those that we entrust with the option to employ deadly force to be experts in de-escalation, crisis decision making, and the use of non-lethal combat methods? That requires much, more, training than we currently provide our police officers.

Of course, resource constraints come into play. Part of the solution for that can be to engage and leverage other community resources to more appropriately take on some traditional police roles, like conducting wellness checks, which could be done by fire/ems; suicidal subject calls that are not in public could go to crisis mental health responders; and police shouldn't be

handling most civil matters. There is clearly a balance here, as we want police to be engaged in the community and not just “enforcers,” but leveraging other community resources could free up police time for training as well as more appropriately place these activities in the community.

The wellness and safety of law enforcement officers is critical not only for the officers, their colleagues, and their agencies but also to public safety. Pillar six of the President’s Task Force report emphasizes the support and proper implementation of officer wellness and safety as a multi-partner effort. The state should build on efforts already underway in this area, such as the police and first responder wellness work initiated by The Justice Education Center, Inc.

As a researcher and data analyst, who has worked with police data for years, it is clear that there is considerable variability in the quality of police data and even more variability on how often those data are actually examined in an open and transparent way. Often there is a considerable time lag before such data become available to the public, and then only in aggregate form. Part of improving transparency would include more efforts to standardize police data collection (beyond the Uniform Crime Reports), and to create a mechanism for the sharing of de-identified data sets that the public could access and analyze. Efforts to provide police data via public data portals like ctdata.org or should be encouraged and supported.

Thank you for listening and have a great day.

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