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Operator: Good day ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice conference call. Today's conference is being recorded. At this time, I'd like to turn the conference over to Director Phil Keith, please go ahead.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Keith, and good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. I'll call the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice to order and on behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank you for joining us today for this important Commission teleconference meeting.

As I mentioned yesterday, this week marks a significant juncture for this Commission as we conclude the planned panels today. Your work has included 15 working groups involving more than 150 subject matter experts on weekly calls and work sessions and we've received more than 190 written statements from organizations and individuals expressing diverse views and opinions on the wide-ranging topics of this Commission.

On behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank each of you for your dedication, your commitment, and personal sacrifices you've made to make this historic Commission successful. It's truly hard to believe that today brings an end to the forward-facing work of the Commission, but this afternoon should prove to be informative, thought-provoking, and appropriate to wrap up our teleconference hearings.

The focus of today's panel is on the rule of law. We'll begin today by hearing from our esteemed colleague and fellow Commissioner Sheriff Robert Gualtieri, who will provide an overview for the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Report.

After a brief question and answer period we'll move to our first panel, which is state and local prosecutors. The last panel of the day will be a police panel where we'll hear from some of the nation's most prominent law enforcement professionals. Like we did yesterday, we'll pause for questions after each panel. At this time, I will ask our executive director Dean Kueter to conduct the roll call of Commissioners.

Dean Kueter: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And before I call the roll, I just like to remind everybody that today's event is open to the press, and for members of the media on the call, if you have any questions or need clarification on anything, please contact Kristina Mastropasqua in the Justice Department's Office of Public Affairs. With that, I'll begin the roll call. Commissioner Bowdich?

Female 1: Joining momentarily. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Clemmons? Commissioner Evans?

Christopher Evans: Here

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Frazier?

Fredrick Frazier: I'm here. I was on mute.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Gualtieri?

Robert Gualtieri: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Hawkins?

Gina Hawkins: Present. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Lombardo?

Regina Lombardo: Here Dean, thank you.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner McDonald?

Erica MacDonald: Good afternoon, present.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Moody?

Ashley Moody: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Parr?

Nancy Parr: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Price?

Craig Price: Good afternoon. I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Ramsay?

Gordon Ramsay: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Rausch?

David Rausch: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Samaniego?

John Samaniego: I'm here.

Dean Kueter: Commissioner Smallwood? Vice-Chair Sullivan?

Katharine Sullivan: I'm here. Thank you.

Dean Kueter: And Commissioner Washington?

Donald Washington: Here.

Dean Kueter: Mr. Chairman, that concludes the roll call.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Dean, for the record. Commissioner Clemmons will be joining us momentarily.

Dean Kueter: Great, thank you.

Phil Keith: Any other announcements, Dean?

Dean Kueter: No sir, we are good to go.

Phil Keith: Thank you. We again want to acknowledge the continuing commitment of the Commissioners, certainly our working groups, the witnesses here today and those that appeared before the Commission previously, and the federal staff toward working to meet the goals of this historic Commission. On behalf of General Barr, we thank each of you.

As noted on previous calls, we encourage Commissioners take notes during the testimony of the panelists, and when we will then open up questions from Commissioners after the last witness of each of today's panelists.

I'm honored now to introduce our first speaker, Sheriff Robert Gualtieri. We are honored today to hear this moving and eye-opening presentation today on the events that led up to the horrific school shooting in Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Sheriff Gualtieri began his law enforcement career, public service career as a detention deputy working in the Pinellas County jail in 1982.

After attending the police academy he joined the Dunedin Police Department as a patrol officer and later rejoined the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office as a law enforcement deputy. He served in the dual role of general counsel and chief deputy until the governor appointed him sheriff in 2011.

He was elected and re-elected sheriff in 2012 and 2016. Sheriff Gualtieri was president of the Florida Sheriff's Association and serves on the board of directors of Major County Sheriffs of America. He is also an executive fellow for the National Police Foundation, a member of the National Sheriff's Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Police Executive Research Forum.

Sheriff Gualtieri earned his undergraduate degree from Eckerd College and his law degree from Stetson University College of Law. He is admitted to practice law in all of Florida's courts, before the United States Supreme Court, as well as the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh

Circuit and the United States District Courts in the Northern, Middle, and Southern Districts of Florida.

Sheriff Gualtieri, we are honored to have you today and look forward to hearing your compelling presentation. You're recognized.

Robert Gualtieri: Thank you, Director Keith. Good afternoon, everyone. It's a pleasure to be with you and to talk about the events and what happened at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14 of 2018.

This is kind of a different presentation for me. I've done this presentation on the last couple years probably at least 50 times around the country. It's normally about a four-hour presentation with a lot of video, a lot of audio. And this is something now that we're going to condense down into a 45-minute audio teleconference only, but I think you'll get the flavor, and certainly a high-level overview with some key takeaways and lessons learned from what happened.

But if I had to give you one key take away from the last two-and-a-half years that I've lived investigating this incident, it would be this, and it may sound a little harsh, but it is what it is, and that is that complacency kills. And I think you'll see why. And understand as I go through this, even with the short time that we have together today, as to why did I say that

But the first thing I want to do is to provide you with a backdrop for why I'm speaking to you about this today. If you know anything about the Florida geography, it should raise some questions for you as to why am I as the sheriff in Pinellas County, Florida, which is in the Tampa Bay area in central Florida on the west coast, talking to you about an event that happened in southeast Florida in Broward County or the Fort Lauderdale area.

And I'm going to explain that to you. And I'll say that as to this event, as we lead into it, and regardless of where I am as the sheriff and where this event happened, is that we all have these events in our lives that are indelibly etched and something that you'll never forget and something that will be part of your core because of what you lived and what you've experienced. And this was such an event for me like 9/11 is for some, and we all have those events in our lives.

And where this started for me was I was sitting on February 14 of 2018 in Washington DC at a meeting of the Major County Sheriffs of America. And I was sitting next to Jim McDonald, who was the Los Angeles County Sheriff at the time. And Sheriff McDonald picked up his phone and he said, you got a school shooting in Florida.

And I looked at it and saw it was in Broward County, and said, that's not good. Probably pretty bad situation going on down there, but it's not going to affect me that much. Again, it's on the other coast. It's, you know, five hours away. It's not my area of responsibility. And the meeting ended.

The next day, I got back here to Florida, and the phone started blowing up because it was quickly determined that there were a number of problems and a number of issues with the law enforcement response to the shooting and so many things surrounding it.

And the governor at the time was Rick Scott, who's now a United States Senator from Florida, and then-Governor Scott and others recognized, there are some serious issues. And there was a unique opportunity because in Florida the legislature is only in session once a year for 60 days, and the legislature was in session. And it was that bad that they realized they need to take advantage of this and do something about it while the legislature was in session. So that was on a Friday.

The following Tuesday, the governor and the cabinet summoned people from law enforcement, the schools, and mental health to Tallahassee. We spent a day looking at things, getting briefed generally, and then were tasked with coming up with potential solutions in that short of an order. That night we met with the governor and cabinet officers and provided some recommendations.

And by Friday of that week, which is unheard of – government just doesn't work that fast, but it did in this case – and by Friday of that week, the governor had a plan to introduce a bill and make changes, and change the fabric really, of school safety in the state of Florida. Over the next couple of weeks, providing officers of the Florida house and senate, work with the governor, and they came up with and passed in three weeks what is I'd say infamously been called in the state of Florida senate bill 7026, which was a 105-page bill that did change the landscape and imposed a number of modifications and new policies to make the schools of the state of Florida safer. There are about 4,000 schools, k through 12 schools in the state of Florida.

And one of the things that bill did was to create the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission. And the statutory mandate was to figure out what happened and to make recommendations subsequently to the governor and to the senate and the house as to what happened and what still needs to be done to improve school safety in the state of Florida.

And shortly after that bill passed, my phone rang and it was then-Governor Scott, and he asked me to chair the commission, which is probably in my now 38-year career in law enforcement probably one of the greatest challenges that I've ever experienced, but also at the same time, one of the most rewarding. I was able to chair the commission and develop some relationships with the families of the slain students and others.

And to be able to know that at the end is that we did turn over every rock. We did figure out what happened, sometimes uncomfortably as you'll hear, and make some recommendations that have been passed subsequently into law here in the state of Florida.

So we spent the last two and a half years. The commission does not sunset till 2023. We've had to, like everything in this world today, taken a little bit of a hiatus because of the COVID situation. But we've made subsequent recommendations to the legislature and there have been subsequent bills have been passed. We anticipate meeting; we were supposed to meet two times already this year. But we probably won't meet again as a commission until October.

Let's talk a little bit about the event itself. On February 14 of 2018, Nikolas Cruz, the shooter, shot and/or killed 24 people at Majority Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on the first floor alone of building 12.

This is where the event happened, which was in building 12. And think about this for a second: in one minute and 44 seconds - so that's not even in two times around on the second hand on your watch - in one minute 44 seconds, he killed and/or shot and killed 24 people. On the third floor of that building, he shot and/or killed an additional 10 people. And that happened in one minute and five seconds.

So all said and done is that Cruz shot and/or killed 34 people in building 12 at Stoneman Douglas in three minutes and 51 seconds. So February 14 certainly changed South Florida forever. It's changed Florida and school safety in Florida and in some other parts of the country.

But I'm going to tell you this: is that it hasn't changed enough and it hasn't changed fast enough, even though we're sitting here more than two years after the event. It's sad and I'm suggesting it's somewhat pathetic that it took 34 people being shot at one of our high schools to have the effect of dramatically changing school safety in the state of Florida.

The question has to be asked: why did it take such a horrific event to have these seismic shifts in law and in policy regarding school safety? Why did it take 20 years after Columbine and six years after Sandy Hook and years after other school shootings? Why are we so slow to change? Why is our memory so short when it comes to these events? I can tell you that through hundreds of hours of testimony before the commission, just multiple meetings and one point a staff of 17 people who are investigators that were turning over every rock is that everything that we have uncovered points largely to a complacent mentality because of the overarching attitude that it quote won't happen here.

The problem is, is that it seems remote to people when these events occur, and they think that these horrific events quote happen somewhere else. Ask the people of Parkland, Florida on February 13, the day before 2018, and they would have told you that shootings like that don't happen in places like Parkland, Florida. Broward County, again, southeast Florida, one county north of Miami-Dade. About 2 million people Parkland, 31 cities in the county. Parkland sits in northwest Broward County. It's a residential community, a bedroom community for the city of Fort Lauderdale.

The west boundary is the Florida Everglades. North boundary is Palm Beach County. And it's residential. People leave their car doors unlocked, they leave their home doors unlocked. They send their kids to school, they go to work in the morning, they come home, everything's good. And three days before this event the Florida Chamber of Commerce named the City of Parkland the safest city in the state of Florida.

So people have that attitude, things don't happen here. Bad things don't happen here. Again, there was, not just in the community but as I'm going to get into here in a second, a high level of complacency about safety because those things happen somewhere else.

And to illustrate that think about this: is that the Broward County school district, which is about the sixth-largest school district in the United States and the second-largest school district in the state of Florida, on February 14 of 2018, in the entire district with 230 schools, hundreds of thousands of students, had no active assailant response policy. The whole district had no active assailant response policy.

That whole district had no requirement the schools conduct active shooter drills. In fact, at Stoneman Douglas High School - and Stoneman Douglas High School is a big high school, 16 building on the campus. about 3,000 students in the one school - they had not conducted any - zero - active shooter drills and well over a year before this incident, there had been one small, and I mean small, briefing for about 15 minutes, and that was only for staff and not students on active assailant response in the year preceding the event.

So where was the school, the school board, the school district, where was their emphasis? They didn't have an active assailant policy, active assailant response policy. Again, this was 20 years after Columbine, six years after Sandy Hook.

But they did have a robust what they call the promise program. And the promise program was something that they spent a lot of time on, they emphasized, and to some degree for some people a little controversial because it was a pre-arrest diversion program for kids.

So when these kids commit crimes on the school campuses around Broward County is that students get up to four diversions each school year for crimes committed on the campus before they could face a criminal charge, and the students get a reset on those four opportunities every single school year.

Now, you're hearing this from somebody that supports juvenile diversion. We are one of the leaders in the state on it. So this isn't an aspersion on juvenile diversion. But what it is and aspersion on is priorities. The priority was leniency, a culture of leniency, a culture that allowed people to get away with things. And when you could commit up to four crimes on campus every year and get a reset every year before there are any consequences, and that's your focus and priority.

And 20 years after Columbine, you have no active assailant response policy, you have no requirement of drills, you're not doing drills, then you're going to get what we ended up with here. And give you an example of what happens when your priorities are not in the right place.

When Nikolas Cruz got out of an Uber on Pine Island Road in front of the school at 2:19 p.m. on February 14 of 2018 and he walked carrying a rifle bag from the Uber to the east door of building 12 he was seen by an employee of the school walking, carrying the rifle bag, and the employee knew Cruz because Cruz had attended Stoneman Douglas. He had been gone for about a year because of all the problems he was having. He had been in effect tossed out.

And this employee sees him, recognizes him in his mind, and this is by the employee's own statements, as crazy boy, the person he knew as crazy boy, and crazy boy was carrying a rifle bag.

And you know what that employee did? Nothing. Didn't get on a radio. Ddidn't notify anybody. Didn't call what they call down there now as a code rad or an active assailant response. He didn't do anything about it. And one of the reasons he didn't do anything about it is because he had not been trained.

He had received no instruction, there were no policies, and this was a fairly low-level employee. He certainly has skin in it, because common sense should have dictated but the school board and

the school district have more skin in it because this employee was never given any instruction and was never trained in what to do or how to do it.

I sent out to you all and you received a PowerPoint presentation. I know we're not going through PowerPoint, obviously here on the call, but if you have it available, and you look at it, you'll see in there, the second slide, there's a photograph, and the photograph is of the actual rifle bag with the AR15 in it that Nikolas Cruz was carrying. And that's what that employee saw. Saw him carrying that rifle bag with the magazine pouches on the outside, and there's no mistaking what it was.

So after he sees him, Cruz goes into building 12, and he begins shooting. But the first active shooter alert for anybody on that campus to react to it was not issued until Cruz was already on the third floor of the building and had shot or killed 32 of his 34 victims.

By that time, it was over; it was too late. And the only reason that somebody issued the alert at that point was a person who was on the campus and had some prior military experience and let his instincts kick in because they didn't have the infrastructure. They didn't have the alert systems. They didn't have the training and the knowledge.

So people on the first floor of the the building, the 24 who were shot and/or killed in just over a minute. They were ambushed, and they had no opportunity to protect themselves because the policies and the procedures and the best practices weren't there.

So there has to be a culture change. There has to be a sense of urgency and accountability to make our schools safer. Complacency and the notion that it won't happen here has to end. What also can't happen is that school safety be put on the back burner because of the current challenges that we have, like COVID and this anti-police sentiment in some areas of the country.

Eliminating school resource officers, in my opinion, is just simply dangerous. One of the things that we all have to keep in mind is that it is going to happen again. That's a hard thing to say but its reality and history teaches us that. Columbine's 20 years ago; these events have happened many times since. And when school goes back, it'll happen again. The only question is when and where. And if there's not a good guy with a gun to stop it, there are going to be mass casualties. It's a fact.

I told you that the Broward County school district didn't have an active shooter response policy in February 2018 and that they'd never had one prior to that. But guess what? Talk about a level of complacency. So this is ground zero. Thirty-four people shot and/or killed three minutes and 51 seconds February 14, 2018 immediately realize there's problems.

That district is ill-equipped, unprepared. They didn't have an active shooter response policy. Well, guess what? They didn't have an active shooter response policy in March, April, May, June, or July of 2018 either.

I spoke before the Broward County School Board about the third week of February of 2019 to give them an overview of the investigation, just when they passed their first-ever active shooter response policy, the second week of February of 2019, a year after the event. Why? Complacency.

We still have school districts in Florida today that resist the school safety laws. Some spend more time trying to get around the requirements than simply implementing them. We have to change because there's one thing that we know for sure, and that is that it's going to happen again.

And a couple of questions that are also for sure but are unknowns and that is where and when. They can happen anywhere, anytime, anyplace, at the hands of anybody. But one of the things

we have to remember is that old adage: always do what you've always done, you're going to get what you always got.

And if we want a different outcome than what happened at Stoneman Douglas High School, 34 people shot and/or killed in three minutes and 51 seconds, we have to do it differently. And doing it differently means accepting we have to change. It means accepting some things that we necessarily don't like. And this has to be viewed through the lens of not what we want but what is realistically and objectively attainable. And if we don't view it through that lens, then we're not going to accomplish what we need to. We're not going to get there.

I can tell you that all of us that touch school safety at all have to meet the expectation, and we have an obligation to meet this expectation of parents. And that parents have a right to expect that when they send their kids to school in the morning, their kids are coming home alive in the afternoon.

And that means it's not what we want. It's not what we like. but it comes down to is what can you live with. And take it from somebody that has been in building 12 at Stoneman Douglas High School way too many times after the shooting.

It's still a crime scene. Nikolas Cruz is sitting in the Broward County jail awaiting trial on the first-degree murder charges. The prosecutors asked that that building remain a crime scene. To this day it's guarded 24/7 by the Broward County Sheriff's Office deputies. And I've been in there, and I've seen that building in its status quo. The kids' bags still on the floor, the work that they were doing at their desks as they were shot and killed is still sitting there.

And going back to the question is, is that it's not what we want, it not we like, what we can live with? And I can tell you having seen that, I can't live with that kids. And none of us should. So we have to change. And we have to be willing to compromise and do some things that we don't like

because this isn't a perfect world. We don't have time to get into this today. But it is the most controversial topic. But it's an important topic.

And it's one that I suggest that every community in this country should at least have a discussion about. Some will very, very quickly and summarily dismiss it for ideological views, for political views, for a whole bunch of other reasons. And that is the issue of whether to have armed personnel on each school campus.

I'll explain to you here in a few minutes what the history shows, what the evidence shows, what the data shows, and then everybody can draw their own conclusions. And of course, every community has the right, of course, based on community desires and tolerances to make their own decisions. But I can tell you the law here in the state of Florida, is that there will be an armed good guy with a gun on every elementary, middle, high school, and charter school campus in the state of Florida. Every one has an armed person on that campus to protect those kids.

Now regardless of that issue, the focus, whatever we do, has to be on harm mitigation because we have to accept that we cannot prevent. That should be our goal, I think we can all agree on that, is our goal should be to prevent one of these incidents, incidents from happening. Nobody wants it to happen. Everybody wants to prevent it. That's the goal. That's what we strive for. That's that unrealistically attainable object.

And as we're striving for it or working for it and we're heading in that direction, our immediate focus, though, has to be on something that I'll suggest is attainable. And that is to mitigate the harm. It has to be mitigating the harm, limiting the damage or carnage as the case may be, as much as possible. So as we look at and we consider and we talk about that immediate focus of harm mitigation, I break it out into three categories, and what the focus should be.

The first is identifying the threat, the second is communicating the threat, and the third is reacting to the threat. So in the simplest of concepts, if people aren't trained, the policies and procedures are not in place, and those who are there on campus, whether you're a principal, a teacher, an administrator, school safety, whatever you are, if you don't know how to identify the threat, then you have no idea what you're looking at, like crazy boy with a rifle bag, who's walked in from an Uber into the east door of a building to shoot and kill 34 - shoot and/or kill 34 people.

And if you don't have any idea about identifying that threat, then guess what, you've got nothing to communicate to others. Now, if you are trained and you have some ideas to what to look for, if you don't have the infrastructure to communicate it then people don't have the ability to react to anything that you're telling them.

So what's with you Stoneman Douglas? Now in this situation, the person who saw him didn't identify the threat. But even if he had no way to convey it, because in that school with about 3,000 people, there were less than 15 on that entire campus of staff that had any form of communication device at all, any form of radio.

And even if somebody with one of those few radios did get onto the radio, only a handful would have heard them. And let's say that somebody who had access to the PA system would have heard it. They only had speakers for the PA system inside classrooms.

So if you're in a hallway, other common areas, you'd never would have heard of at all. So it was ill-equipped. And there was not that infrastructure in place to identify the threat, the structure, the infrastructure to communicate the threat wasn't there. And guess what?

When I appeared before the Broward County Commission in the third week of February of 2019, a year later, and I asked them, I said, what's your communication infrastructure so that the threat

can be communicated if somebody identifies, remember, they had just passed their first active shooter response policy the week before. And I learned that it hadn't improved.

And their response was that they were going through a procurement process, they were out to bid in an RFP. And as soon as they got through all that, then they would consider how to put the radios and other communication devices in place. Complacency, no sense of urgency. And you know what I said to them then is that you people are being complacent, is that there is no sense of urgency, and that you all need to fix this.

And that what you should do is get down to Walmart and buy some radios and some walkie-talkies off the shelf and equip your staff so they can communicate about these things. And their response was, well, yeah, but we don't do that. Okay, always do what you've always done, you're always going to get what you always got.

So there you go. As far as reacting to the threat, there had been, there's no policies, but there's no drills either. Those kids that were on that first floor in those first four classrooms of building 12, they got ambushed. And when the shots started ringing out, when Nikolas Cruz walked in there with that gun bag, and he took that AR-15 out, and he threw that magazine in the chamber and started firing into classrooms. Those kids didn't know where to go, what to do, how to do it.

And many of them just remained in the line of fire, they didn't have any safe areas or hard corners, they were clueless as to what to do so they couldn't properly react to the threat because they didn't know.

So as we're looking at harm mitigation, again, I'll go back to what I suggest is the model that we should consider framing this out to mitigate the harm, we have to have the right infrastructure in place, the right policies, procedures, et cetera, to immediately identify a threat that's on the school campus. Once that threat's identified, it has to be able to be effectively communicated to others.

And then those that are hearing that communication about the threat have to know what to do and how to do it or how to react. So it's identify, communicate, and react. Prevention is super important. That's what we should strive for. But it's long term, it's big dollars, big-ticket items. It's all those things that take time and take resources. So focus on the harm mitigation, and then as you're working on the prevention, you hope it all kinda meets someplace in the middle.

So, set the stage a little bit here. We only have a short time left here but as far as Nikolas Cruz is concerned, Nikolas Cruz was at the time of the shooting 18 years old. He was born to a prostitute mother who was addicted to crack cocaine. Born in Plantation, Florida. Immediately upon birth was adopted by Roger and Linda Cruz. They had moved down from New York. Roger was 62 years old at the time that they adopted Nikolas. Linda was about 48.

The birth mother a year later gave birth to another son Zachary. They adopted him as well. And the Cruzes took both boys and they were living in Parkland. Nikolas was immediately identified as having very serious behavioral issues. As soon as he went to preschool he was lashing out at kids. He had behavioral problems, violent tendencies, et cetera.

As soon as he went to the Broward County Schools, he was an ESE student, exceptional student education. When he was five, his adopted father Roger died passed away in bed, Nikolas found him deceased in bed. So the mother Linda tried to raise the kids, and it didn't go well.

Again, mental health issues, behavioral issues, violent tendencies with Nikolas. And she became an enabler to the point where her solution to his desire to kill animals and kill birds and all other types of violent acts was to go to Walmart and buy him airsoft guns so he could shoot these animals. When he turned 18 and wanted a state ID card, so he could buy guns, she's the one that took him to the state driver's license office so he could do it.

So she was an enabler and really added to the problem. She tried to raise these kids. She did get him mental health treatment. He probably got more services from the mental health providers in Broward County and the Broward County Schools than anybody I've ever seen.

But he was never diagnosed with a serious mental illness, an SMI, you know, schizophrenia, anything like that. He had other behavioral issues but never with a serious mental illness even though he had various disorders.

So he muddles along and then in early 2017, he left Stoneman Douglas for a variety of reasons. And in November of 2017, his mother Linda, she passed away from natural causes. He moved up to a family friend's house in Palm Beach County, one county north.

He stayed there for a short period of time and then was thrown out by that family friend because he was acting weird and he had all these guns that he had acquired. He moved back down to Parkland, stayed with a friend of his family.

The kid's name was JT Snead and the Snead family lived in Parkland. They felt sorry for Cruz. They let him move in. He moved in there in late 2017. He started developing his plan. And his plan was on the day and at the time of his choosing, he was going to go to Stoneman Douglas High School after he stopped at a city park in Parkland. And he was going to kill as many kids as he possibly could on the playground, and then go to Stoneman Douglas and kill at least 20 people. That was his goal.

He continued to slide after his mother's death, and he started making self-videos with audio and video. After the incident, I was going to go through this here in a second, but after the incident, there is a search done through his phone and there was all kinds of video and audio and all his plans were laid out and all kinds of internet searches that were troubling.

And when I do this presentation, this only takes a second normally I play one of the videos that was taken two days before the incident that Cruz did where he laid out his plan. And it's in the packet you have of the printed, it shows Cruz's face. And these are in his words, and this is what we found when we searched the phone. And this is the audio. I'm going to play it for you so you can hear in Cruz's own words, three days before the shooting, what his plan was.

Nikolas Cruz: Hello. My name is Nik, and I'm going to be the next school shooter of 2018. My goal is at least 20 people with an AR-15 and a couple of tracer rounds. I think I can do get done. Location is Stoneman Douglas in Parkland, Florida. It's going to be a big event. When you see me on the news, you'll all know who I am. They're all going to die. Pew pew pew pew. Can't wait.

Robert Gualtieri: So that was his video three days before the event. I've watched that video, heard that audio now countless times. It's eerie. And I wish we were together where you could see it because if you could see his face that would give you obviously a lot of concern as well.

In any event, that was his plan, and he effected it. On February 14, he called an Uber from the Sneed house. Uber driver dropped him off in front of Stoneman Douglas High School and what his plan was, pretty much he effected it, but thank goodness for whatever reason, he did not stop at that city park and kill as many kids as he could on the playground. He went directly to Stoneman Douglas.

If you look at the packet that you have in the PowerPoint presentation, it lays it out on the next slide. And I told you this is that he went in and fired 136 rounds and tried to kill 34 people in three minutes and 51 seconds. He spent the final two minutes that he was in the building on the third floor in the teachers' lounge, trying to set up a sniper position.

Thankfully, the glass was hurricane resistant glass. As he was firing the AR-15 out the window he had about 200 rounds left. And he couldn't fire out because the rounds fragmented due to the hurricane resistant glass.

So after he shot and killed the 34 - shot and/or killed the 34 - tried to sell a sniper position. and there at that point when he set up a sniper position there were about 900 kids in that one building and they were in the courtyard below halfway into campus.

If he had been able to fire out of that third floor sniper point with those kids fleeing that building, I suggested that we'd be having an even worse discussion. It'd be worse than even the Las Vegas shooting because there were literally thousands of kids that were fleeing that campus and about 900 of them were in that courtyard below as he took up that sniper position.

So he couldn't. He left, ran over to a Walmart to the west, sat in there, went to McDonald's in the Walmart, had a soda. Then he went, left, and went to another fast food restaurant nearby, sat down with a brother of one of the kids that he had just shot and killed in the school, sat there for a few minutes and left.

And then he was found wandering in an adjacent neighborhood by a police officer from the Coconut Creek Police Department, which is a neighboring jurisdiction, and that's where he was arrested. And today he's just, again at the Broward County jail.

If you look at that packet that you have in front of you as we wrap up here, I'll cover a couple of things is that one of the things that anybody who has studied these active assailant attacks and school shootings will tell you that we can't have what we want.

There is no crystal ball. There is no profile of who is going to be the next school shooter. It can be anywhere, anytime, at the hands of anybody. It could be somebody who is a sleeper; it's

somebody that can be a frequent flyer in that law enforcement is well aware of. It could be somebody with mental health issues; it could be somebody with no mental health issues.

So whether it's the Secret Service or anybody else that has studied these, there is no probative, useful, beneficial profile that's going to tell you who that next school shooter is going to be. But what the history can tell us and teach us is that what happens, where to put our resources, and what we should prioritize.

So we looked at the attacks over the previous 20 years of targeted attacks on K through 12 schools in the United States; there were 46 of those. And think about this for a second, it's a very high percentage, somewhere around 94%, 43 of the 46. were committed by insiders and that's current or former students.

Most involved handguns, not long guns or shotguns. And most, as this case, were over with in less than four minutes. Finally, is, is that the absolute majority of all of these were not stopped by cops; they were stopped by school personnel. So what does all that tell you is that if you're a decision-maker or you influence on a decision-maker, and you're looking about, you look into to make decisions and put your resources in a certain place?

There's a lot of discussion about campus hardening and fences and electronic locks and all those things. Well look at the data: 43 of the 46 were insiders. They were lawfully where they could be at the time that they effected their carnage, their shootings. So the majority of them had handguns. And so in the majority of the cases are over with very fast.

So put all that together, what it means is they're committed by people who are lawfully allowed to be where they are. These aren't intruders on campus. And they are carrying handguns which are easily concealed and quickly produced. And they are over within a very short amount of time.

And then the fourth element is, is that the people who stopped them most often are cops. Why? because cops can't be everywhere all the time, which then goes back to that notion which we're not going to get into about arming people on campuses. The reality of it is, is that you got to mitigate the harm.

It's going to happen. It's going to happen fast. It's most often going to happen by somebody who has permission to be on the campus. They're most often going to do with a handgun. And you got to stop it as quick as you can. Because no matter how you look at it, whatever your feelings are on any of the issues, I think something else we can all agree on is one person shot or killed is too many, but one person is better than 34. So it's a matter of absolutely having to mitigate the harm.

If you look in your packets. I'm going to skip down here for a the second. I just want to show you some of the things that were on Cruz's phone. If you flip down a few pages you'll see in there some of the things that he had researched. According to the school schedule, a lot of pornography, homicidal thoughts and urges, he queried on there. How long does it take a cop to show up at the school? Is killing people easy? Rape caught on video, and then he laid out his plan in the note section of his iPhone. Basketball court four targets, still thinking of ways to kill people. I want to kill people, but I don't know how I can do it. Walk to a park, get someone to pick me up. I just don't know, but it will happen soon. So that was his plan. And that's pretty much the plan that he effected.

If you look to the next page, it's got a lot of photographs of him with various rifles. He had a lot of hate towards minority groups. You can see that bigotry there with some of those photographs et cetera that were found on his phone when it was searched. A lot of people had knowledge. And most of those people that had knowledge of troubling behavior did not come forward, unfortunately.

And it wasn't till afterward in the investigation that we realized how many indicators there were, that people didn't come forward with information. So I think that is probably a good point. Director. Keith, I know you should keep it there to about 10 til with questions. That's a very quick overview.

Again, normally when I do this, it's about four hours. There's a lot of information here, two years' worth of investigation, but hopefully, that gives you some knowledge and overview as to what happened. but where we are in the state of school safety and why it's so important that we move off this dime and that the complacency ends and I just leave you with this is a remember for all of us.

It's not what we want. It's not what we like. it is what can we live with and what we have to live with is doing the best job possible we can for the kids of this country and to make schools as safe as they possibly can and to mitigate that harm. So I'll end there and take any questions that anybody has.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Sheriff Gualtieri, for your presentation. Very powerful and certainly want to thank you for your distinguished service to our country as sheriff and playing such an important role for this historic Commission. At this time we'll open up for questions from our Commissioners to Sheriff Gualtieri. Just as a reminder, Commissioners, your mics are hot at all times. Commissioners with questions for Sheriff Gualtieri?

Craig Price: This is Craig Price.

Phil Keith: Commissioner Price, you're recognized.

Craig Price: Hi Sheriff, I certainly appreciate your testimony and very powerful, and one of the most interesting ones that I've been a part of. So I appreciate that. We are in the process of setting up

a state-wide school safety resource center to allow many of our rural schools who don't have the resources or the folks on hand to put school safety programs together to help them with that, that process.

But the question I have for you is, if you could write the script on what your vision is for how this Commission or what we could do as a country, to put this thing forward, what would that look like for you, that process?

Robert Gualtieri: In essence, that people focus on the basics, and identify what those are. The things that are noncontroversial, that will have the greatest impact and it gets back to the harm mitigation, realizing that I'd say any list of harm mitigation includes some things that are controversial. So let's stay away from that.

So let's not get into the arming of personnel, et cetera, but let's have a mandate that every school district in this country has an active assailant response policy for the district and for every school. That there are drills. You know, and I'm not mitigating this. I'm not trying to downplay it. But when's the last time that somebody was killed in a fire in a school in this country? And I believe it was like, 1957.

So we do fire drills every month. Why aren't we doing active shooter drills every month? Let's put the emphasis on what's happening today. Let's make sure that we have safe areas and hard corners. Let's make sure we have communication devices. Let's focus everything that we can on that mitigation of identifying a threat, communicating, and reacting and giving these kids a fighting chance and giving the staff a fighting chance.

So I think it would be focusing on those noncontroversial basic core competencies, I'll call them, that every district should have and that everybody should focus on.

Craig Price: Very good. I appreciate that. Thanks, sir.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Commissioner. Other Commissioners with questions?

Gina Hawkins: Chairman, Commissioner Hawkins real quick.

Phil Keith: Yes Commissioner. You're recognized.

Gina Hawkins: So first of all, Sheriff Gualtieri, Commissioner Gualtieri, always an honor to be part with you, doing work. Always an honor to know much, wealth of knowledge you have. This – do you have – I know you provide this in a training format for, I guess, law enforcement. Do you know if this was presented or any format for like school systems to learn from or would that be one of your recommendations for the Commission?

Robert Gualtieri: Well, absolutely. I have done this again, you know, many, many times and have different versions of it, because there's so much here and I focused on the school. But there was – and I'll just use a technical term –such a messed up law enforcement response and so many problems with the 911 system and the lack of radio interoperability and the lack of command and control.

So there is a version of this that I do, again, that encompasses all that but there's also a separate version, Commissioner Hawkins, that does focus just on the schools, and I've done it for superintendents and for school personnel and broken it out. So yeah, we do that and have done it.

Of course now with COVID, all the presentations that were scheduled for this year have been canceled, but so far, but yes, there is a school version. It is so important. I tell you the best audiences, the best presentations are a mix of teachers, principals, school administrators, school

board members, cops, mental health professionals, and elected leaders from city council, city commissions, and county commissions. When we've done some of those where you really get a mix of all those people in one room, because it lets them walk away realizing, you know, we all got to come together. We got to work together, and it helps put them on the same page for their decision making, so yeah, yes is the answer to that.

Gina Hawkins: Thank you. Absolutely I will probably look for that because what you said last was, what can we live with? Putting that in the hands of the community, and like you said, the mix of everyone decision makers, I believe would definitely make them. But thank you once again; an honor again.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Commissioner. Other Commissioners with questions? Here is a question for you on information sharing. I've been privileged to hear and see your presentation before and there was an acute, miscue, I guess you can say, on interagency sharing of information. Could you address the - what you think would be a solution for the lack of communications and sharing of information about this episode?

Robert Gualtieri: Yeah, so one of the - it's an issue, it's a challenge is the multitude of records management systems, RMS systems, that law enforcement agencies have around the country and within counties. So as an example, in Broward County, they have 31 different municipalities, plus the Sheriff's Office so 32 different jurisdictions. The Sheriff's Office provides its police services in 13 of the cities. The rest have their own police departments.

And they have eight different records management systems just in Broward County. And Broward County, of course, abuts Miami-Dade County and abuts Palm Beach County and Parkland sits on the border of Palm Beach County.

So for a cop, and anybody that's trying to coordinate any of these resources, and if you're looking at threat management, et cetera, is that in order to do all of your indices checks, just in Broward County alone, just in Broward County to check one name, you've got to check nine different systems. So that doesn't even check in some of the others in the adjacent counties plus state plus federal.

There's also no tie between the discipline systems in the school district and law enforcement. There's a real disconnect with the mental health providers and sharing of information with law enforcement and the mental health providers.

So there's definitely a void. And there was a void here as well and a pretty substantial one that was recognized by the FBI. The FBI's the National Call Center in West Virginia had received two tips on Cruz. And those tips went into a black hole. They're never sent out to the field.

There was also information —and I'll say this and the deputy director and I have had discussions about this and he's supposed to come to our meeting this year to address the Commission on what happened and didn't happen, but most importantly, how the FBI in their system of taking calls has rectified it.

And quite honestly, they're an example of what to do and how to fix a problem when you identify it. There are so many agencies in Broward County that follow the FBI's lead. Maybe the sheriff that's now the former sheriff wouldn't be the former sheriff and would still have his job, you know, but he circled the wagons on it didn't accept responsibility for it so now he's the former sheriff.

But it's, there's definitely a needed room in the schools. Some kids saw problems and they brought information to the assistant principal who's now a former assistant principal, but he didn't do anything with it. But they had 125 different incidents in the Broward County Public Schools incident system on Cruz but there's no sharing of that information with law enforcement.

So yeah, Director Keith, we could have a pretty lengthy discussion about all of the records issues, the information sharing issues, et cetera, and they are substantial and really reflected in this case as a substantial issue.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Sheriff. Other questions for Sheriff Gualtieri?

Ashley Moody: Chairman, this is Ashley Moody from Florida.

Phil Keith: Yes, ma'am, you're recognized.

Ashley Moody: Sheriff Gualtieri, let me just begin by saying what a tremendous asset you are to the state of Florida. I cannot think of a better person to have led this Marjory Stoneman Douglas commission, many of you may not know, in addition to serving as sheriff and having extensive law enforcement experience, he's also a trained lawyer.

And I know that that was invaluable as you weeded through evidence and determined what the best recommendations could be for the State of Florida and now as it turns out, across the nation, so thank you for your service. And I think from your testimony, what I'm hearing you say in sum is that many of our schools across the nation and particularly in Florida have been reactive to these types of situations.

And if you could make one main recommendation it would be we must be more proactive in instituting policies, training, ensuring we have the right resources and equipment, and quite frankly, architecture within schools in a proactive way to prevent these rather than continuously reacting and then ignoring what happened.

And I'm wondering because so much was missed in terms of information sharing, in a proactive way leading up to this incident, would part of maybe your recommendation be that we have a body that is assigned, whether that be in one national law enforcement agency, to proact or maybe in a state-wide office of law enforcement to proactively assess threats, engage with schools to ensure that they know about these, preventing either specified threats or more general threats if there's a lack of security or policy or procedure. Would that fall within any of your recommendations?

Robert Gualtieri: Yes, General Moody. I think that's right. I think that where we are is in the area of threat press only there. Is that overall we do a decent job and I'm talking about the collective we as law enforcement around the country. We in some places, of course, it's better than others, and some places much worse, but I'm just averaging this out, is that we do a decent job of information coming to us. So I'll say receiving information, identifying the threat but a lot of it is reactive.

It's really not proactive, but we do a decent job and we do a decent job of initially assessing it. But we have a tremendous, a tremendous amount of room for improvement in managing threat. So once we get the information, we do the initial checks, somebody goes out, talks to someone, and that's about it. And that's where it stops. And I think that we need to have robust threat management entities, and whether they are units within law enforcement agencies, or however that's set up.

But one of the most significant focuses moving forward needs to be on long-term management of threats. It's not a one and done. and just because somebody today, there's not enough to either take them in for an involuntary exam for mental health or to bring a criminal charge or to get them services or whatever it may be, is that there needs to be that continual monitoring and evaluation of that threat, you know, over a period of time until you can determine that the threat is no longer of a concern.

So I absolutely think that there's a tremendous amount of room to improve what we're doing in the area of threat management.

Ashley Moody: Thank you, Sheriff.

Phil Keith: Thank you Commissioner, thank you, Sheriff. Other questions for the Sheriff? Again, Sheriff, we thank you for your time and the preparation it took to make this presentation to this Commission. We are deeply indebted and grateful.

Robert Gualtieri: You're welcome.

Phil Keith: Before we move to the next panel, I'll ask our executive director if he has an announcement to make.

Dean Kueter: The only thing I would say to everybody is just to remind everybody once again that the call is open to the press.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Dean.

Female 1: Sound is breaking up. I'm sorry, can you repeat that?

Dean Kueter: I just wanted to let everybody know that the call is open to the press.

Robert Gualtieri: And Director Keith, just so you know, and I didn't say this too just, you know, I played some audio in there as well. And the things I said is that everything that I convey to you all is open public record and then some of these presentations, the press has been present. So, you know, I didn't say that; usually, I do, but everything's I provided is open source.

Phil Keith: Thanks for that clarification Sheriff. Now we'll move to our state and local prosecutor's panel.

We'll hear from our witnesses and then we'll entertain questions from Commissioners to our distinguished panelists.

Our first distinguished panelist is Mr. Barry Dunn, who is the deputy attorney general for the State of Kentucky. General Dunn will be delivering testimony on behalf of the Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron today. Mr. Dunn was appointed as deputy attorney general in December of 2019.

Before his appointment, he was the general counsel for Kentucky public, where he served as the state's chief lawyer on the regulation of financial institutions, insurance, horse racing, alcoholic beverages, construction, professional licensing, and charitable gaming. Mr. Dunn attended law school at the University of Louisville where he was named outstanding graduate and served on the law review, and was the president of moot court board. Thank you for joining us today, General Dunn. You're now recognized.

Barry Dunn: Thank you so much. I appreciate the introduction. And I want to begin by thanking President Trump for establishing the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice, Attorney General Barr for carrying through on the President's directives, and to the members of the Commission for your devotion to preventing and reducing crime, upholding the rule of law, and to assisting victims of crime.

As the chief law enforcement officer of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Attorney General Cameron strives every day to advance the public safety outcomes of the men, women, and children of all 120 Kentucky counties. Thankfully, General Cameron's not alone in that goal. Every day thousands of law enforcement officers show up to work throughout Kentucky, ready to take on the day's work from fighting crime to establishing important relationships within the community.

Likewise, Kentuckians elect 177 local prosecutors to oversee the administration of justice and the protection of victims at a local level. From the Office of the Attorney General to the police officer on the beat, those of us who have chosen this career path really just want one thing and that's to protect the public and see that our laws are enforced without any fear or favor. But that aspiration did not, for most of us, form late in life.

As a child, I wanted to be either a police officer, a firefighter, or a soldier, and I don't think I was alone. Americans, by and large, are imbued with a sense of wanting to serve the public. Today, though, I think that serving the public is under attack in certain sectors. And I think we need to do our best to change that.

I'm not sure that the children growing up today have that same sense of wanting to serve our country as part of law enforcement or as a member of our military, because those sectors are often under attack. Public servants certainly are and must always be subject to training, oversight, and improvement, but absent good reason they really should not be subject to attack.

Our system is a system of ordered liberty. And our laws ensure that scales of justice are balanced and law enforcement is what prevents that scale from tipping toward anarchy. I think we all share an obligation to be a convening authority as we work together, especially in this day and age, to further respect for law enforcement and the rule of law.

We also need to take a hard sobering look at ways to improve which is what I understand that this Commission is doing. To that end, the Kentucky Attorney General does have some recommendations for the committees or the Commission's consideration.

For example, the Kentucky Attorney General's office does recommend that the Commission take a strong look at continuing community policing efforts across the nation. What we've seen in

Kentucky is that when sheriff's offices and local police departments work closely with their neighborhoods, it promotes collaboration, trust, respect, and a greater ability to identify and solve problems. We know the research suggests that community policing improves outcomes.

And just to give a few examples in Kentucky, we have a sheriff's office in far western Kentucky, the McCracken County Sheriff Matt Carter, who took the lead on establishing a program recently to provide free and voluntary, free and voluntary transportation to anyone who might be serving or excuse me experiencing a substance abuse disorder. They the sheriff's office there would transport that person to a treatment facility without any fear of that person facing criminal charges or without that interaction action being used against them in any way.

Kentucky law enforcement is on the front end of some innovative practices. And we're very proud of them for doing that. We also know that many agencies in Kentucky engage in things like citizen's academies, school partnerships, community forums, government activities, and participate in community service in other ways, whether it's a local fair or other community events.

So many individuals in the law enforcement community and our prosecutors already do many of these things, but there's always room for growth. And we do believe that that community policing is so key to getting the relationships between law enforcement and our communities back to where they need to be.

We also urge that everyone considers really making sure that departments around the country are representative of the individuals and the communities that they serve. Attorney General Cameron is the first African-American Attorney General in Kentucky's history. He's very proud of that fact.

We need to do our best to make sure that citizens who are in our local communities have trust in their local officials, that they are - they feel that those local officials in law enforcement and

elsewhere are representative of them. And I think that's more likely to occur when individuals share similar ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds.

Last we also suggest that the Commission consider the development of model law enforcement policies such as physical restraint policies and duty to intervene policies. We understand that those types of things have been in the news lately, but the development of such model policies could be very, very influential, especially for rural departments like those that we have in Kentucky that do not have the same resources as some other departments.

We think that the development of these best practices and pushing those out to the communities for their own consideration could be very helpful. And again, just urge the Commission to consider doing such a thing. In closing, I want to thank the Commission for its time, thank you all for the efforts that you're putting into ensuring that our law enforcement communities are respected, that the rule of law is respected. And with that, I will yield my time.

Phil Keith: Thank you, General Dunn, for that informative testimony, and certainly, your service to the state of Kentucky. Our next panelist is the Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge. She's the first woman and first Republican in Arkansas history to be elected as Attorney General. She serves as co-chair of the National Association of Attorney Generals veterans' affairs committee and co-chairs the National Association of Attorney Generals.

General Rutledge clerked for the Arkansas Court of Appeals and was a deputy counsel to the former governor Mike Huckabee, served as a deputy prosecuting attorney in Lonoke County, Arkansas, and was an attorney for the department of human services previously. A native and faithful Arkansan, she's a graduate of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville and University of Arkansas, Little Rock, William H. Bowen School of Law. Thank you for joining us today, General Rutledge. You're recognized.

Leslie Rutledge: Well, thank you, Chairman Keith, and good afternoon Commissioners. My name is Leslie Rutledge and I am the Attorney General of the great State of Arkansas. It is an honor to be here today and to be able to testify on such an important topic before this body. I first want to thank the Commission for your efforts. And I also want to thank our President Donald J. Trump and Attorney General William Barr for their leadership and initiative in creating this Commission.

As Arkansas Attorney General, I serve as the state's chief law enforcement officer and chief legal officer, and I have previously served as a local prosecuting attorney. So today I speak to you with the authority of experience and great personal passion and support for the rule of law and the essential societal need to respect our law enforcement officers.

I submitted to the Commission three recommendations for consideration and will briefly cover those now. I would first recommend that law enforcement agencies should work to initiate and create stronger community partnerships. Law enforcement is very much a community-oriented profession, as the vast majority of our nation's law enforcement officers often serve in the communities where they reside.

However, as we are seeing now many communities still feel disconnected from their own policing agencies. I have the honor of annually visiting with community leaders and law enforcement officers from all of Arkansas' 75 counties multiple times throughout the year in their hometowns. This is important to me as an elected official because it allows me to hear directly from Arkansans and to have a better understanding of the issues and concerns communities are facing.

These are often problems that I would have never heard of or have been able to resolve if I would have taken a reactive approach and expected these community leaders to pick up the phone and make an official report to my office.

While I know the majority of law enforcement agencies are willing to listen to citizen input. I strongly encourage our law enforcement leadership to take this same proactive approach with their community groups and organizations so that they can encourage open and frequent dialogue.

Community policing cannot just be left to the patrolmen alone. Leadership must get involved so they can proactively address concerns and receive feedback on how their officers can improve public interaction.

Next, I would recommend increased funding and accessibility for law enforcement training. I could not more strongly disagree with the defund the police movement occurring in parts of our country currently. I can say with certainty that I have never seen a problem in law enforcement that was the result of over funding.

However, I have seen numerous problems and hardships as a result of significant law enforcement underfunding. Providing continuing law enforcement training is always a concern. And I'm confident that if police funding this further cut that training, even free training, will be one of the first things eliminated from agency budgets. Arkansas is a very rural state. Our entire state population is only around 3 million people. For perspective, that is almost a million less people than the population of the City of Los Angeles.

There are just under 10,000 certified law enforcement officers to protect and serve Arkansans every day, with many of them serving in very rural counties, often with a staff of under 10 people in a coverage area of over 500 square miles.

While Arkansas law requires a minimum of 24 hours of continuing education for officers each year, it is often hard for these smaller departments to sacrifice the manpower or provide travel and lodging expenses so that these officers can attend quality and necessary training.

Elected officials at all levels of government should take this issue very seriously and ensure adequate funding is provided for traditional in-person training while considering the unique concerns of our rural agencies by making available quality remote educational opportunities.

Finally, I would recommend to the Commission the need to increase law enforcement training and resources for crisis intervention. I firmly believe that states and locales should be given the flexibility and the resources to implement judicial and law enforcement programs that best reflect the needs of their community. consistent with President Trump's June 16 executive order, our policing agencies need more adequate training to deal with mental health issues and opioid addiction, which has greatly plagued our great state of Arkansas.

These are issues that our law enforcement officers are more frequently dealing with, and I find that they often are at a loss on how to adequately respond. In Arkansas, we have implemented drug courts and even a few mental health courts to address the individual's underlying problems. These specialty courts offer an alternative to the traditional criminal justice system and additionally include treatment programs for participants.

I'm pleased to see the results from this approach, and I hope it will reduce recidivism rates and continue to alleviate the burden of our correctional facilities. I should also mention that the daily cost of these programs are often one-tenth of what it would cost to incarcerate the same person.

We are working to apply the same concept to our law enforcement efforts and shift the mentality that the only safe option available is the detention and incarceration of the mentally ill or individual who struggles with addiction.

We have also created crisis stabilization units throughout our state to further resources and options for our law enforcement officers. We have seen that while we are working to provide the

necessary training to our police officers, we must also make sure that we have adequate mental health infrastructure in place to support them.

In conclusion, I know that this is a difficult time for our great country. But I believe this is a time ripe for civil discourse and an opportunity for us to find common ground to resolve long-standing divisive issues.

I applaud the efforts of our governor, Asa Hutchinson, a former U.S. attorney, former director of the Drug Enforcement Administration, and former Undersecretary of Homeland Security, who has recently created a law enforcement task force very similar to this Commission to review current Arkansas law enforcement practices and to strengthen law enforcement and community relations.

It is imperative that we also give chiefs of police and sheriffs and other supervisors the protocols and structures to remove bad officers for ethical violations before they escalate to dangerous situations. And while there are some who should never have had the honor of wearing the badge, the vast majority of our law enforcement officers are deeply patriotic model citizens who serve their communities bravely, selflessly, and honorably every single day.

God bless each and every one of our peacekeepers. God bless those of you all serving on this Commission, our President Donald J. Trump, and certainly, God bless our United States of America. Thank you again for the time today and I will be happy to answer any questions later.

Phil Keith: Thank you, General Rutledge, for your valued testimony here today and certainly for your service to the great State of Arkansas and our country. Our next panelist is Mr. Eric Olsen who's the Commonwealth's Attorney for Stafford County in Virginia. Mr. Olsen has been a prosecutor for more than 30 years, beginning his prosecution career in 1989 as an assistant commonwealth attorney in Stafford, Virginia. In 2011, he was elected commonwealth attorney.

He is presently serving his third term in office. Mr. Olsen served as president of Virginia Association of Commonwealth Attorneys and is on the Board of Directors from the National District Attorneys Association, having served as past president of that organization. We thank you for joining us today, Mr. Olsen. You're now recognized.

Eric Olsen: Well, thank you very much. Greetings to members of the Commission, I'm very honored to be part of this panel among such distinguished panelists. My voice is a little bit different from those you've heard, because I'm from a smaller jurisdiction and, and I guess that's what I'd like to address in some of the comments that I make today.

The Commission is focused, at least this panel is, on respect for law enforcement, the rule of law, something that I have lived and experienced and made my career for over 30 years as a local prosecutor.

And one of the things that occurred to me as I was considering what I was going to say today was, you know, what is the role of the Federal government or a Presidential Commission or Congress at the great level of the United States of America when 95% of all crime is investigated and prosecuted at the local level?

And I ask that question because I do have some suggestions and some solutions. Because the United States, the Federal government, the President can take a leadership role in the way that law enforcement and prosecution happens at the local level.

And I think it's the fundamental role of the Federal government of the United States, to reach down to our localities, to the citizens that live lives in their neighborhoods, and do what they can to assist them be safe and secure in their homes. That's what I do as a locally elected prosecutor.

That's what our law enforcement officials do every single day. That's our mission, to make sure that the people that live in our communities are safe and secure. It's our job to make them so. It's interesting with so many things happening in our country at a national level, the 24-hour news cycle.

And one would think that the law enforcement that occurs in our large cities, the view of police that's, I believe a minority view in many large cities, is the way that the entire country feels about law enforcement and the experience of our country.

That's not my experience and it's not the experience of the people that I serve in my local jurisdiction. As I noted in my written statement, Virginia has 120 different elected Commonwealth's Attorneys. That's the way it is in a lot of states. The locality, the county, or the city elects their own prosecutor.

The county or the city elects their own sheriff, elects their board of supervisors or their county commissioners who then appoint a police chief. And so law enforcement, quality of life is secured at the local level. And it's secured by the citizens and the people that live in that community. My experience is in the smaller communities, in the rural communities, in the suburban communities, there has always been and still is great respect for law enforcement.

And I think one of the dangers that we need to guard against is the view of larger populations, large cities, the experience of which is far different than many, many, many Americans, that that view of law enforcement, and the solutions or the response that comes from it has to be the same view or the same response at the local level.

And there's a real danger in that, because if the experience at the local level for many Americans is different than what's shared by a minority, then there's more of a potential for friction, and I

think more of a potential for problems. I think the best example of that, something I noted in my written comments, is the school resource officer.

Many of you, probably all of you, know about school resource officers. A brilliant idea that was adopted over 20 years ago to make sure that children in school are safe by having a trained law enforcement officer in the school. It happened before Columbine, but certainly after the Columbine shooting, there was more of an emphasis on making the schools safe, and one of the ways to do that is to have a trained law enforcement officer in those schools..

Having a law enforcement officer in the school gives a level of safety and security. But I will have to say there have been issues and problems and consequences of having a trained law enforcement officer in school, one of which is that from a law enforcement perspective, you know, their job is to combat crime.

And when they see crime, they address it, they investigate it, and they make an arrest. And in some cases, that's not necessarily the best approach in a school setting. That's one of the frictions that has happened because of the school resource officer program.

There's a minority voice in this country that espouses removal of police officers from the schools, because of what they describe as the school-to-prison pipeline and this idea that law enforcement officers in school are the problem, they're not the solution, and they're causing more problems than good.

That's a minority view, I believe, and I will say that that view is not shared by the people in my jurisdiction. It's not shared by the majority of citizens in this country that live in smaller jurisdictions, rural jurisdictions, suburban jurisdictions. You know, those parents want their children to be safe.

They see the mass shootings on the news; they see the school shootings. They're afraid to send their children into an environment where they're not safe. And they know that the best way to assure their safety is to have a trained law enforcement officer in the school.

So here, on the one hand, you have this movement driven by large population centers to remove school resource officers from schools, and in thousands of schools all across this country, the parents of those students want the school resource officer to be there. And that's the danger of having a national narrative or a minority view drive what happens in smaller jurisdictions.

Hopefully, that that movement will not trickle down so far that parents are worried for their children's safety. I hope it won't happen here, and I hope that it doesn't happen across the Commonwealth of Virginia. I think it's just a way of highlighting the dangers of having one narrative or a minority view on a national level drive what happens at the local level.

And I guess that gets to my point about what is the role of the Federal government when it comes to issues of public safety, of law enforcement, and the component part of law enforcement -- which is my job -- after someone has been arrested, what happens to them in court. What is the role of the Federal government?

And as I point out in my written statement, I do have some suggestions. That leadership role can include best practices, establishing national standards, and providing states through block grants or other means with the resources to provide adequate training.

As an example of the need for adequate training, let me go back to school resource officers. If you have a well-trained school resource officer that is committed to being in the school, understands their role, has been trained on the best practices, that school resource officer, that law enforcement officer is going to be interacting with students on a day-to-day basis and he will

gain the respect of those students, those impressionable adolescents and children that he deals with every day.

It'll have a profound effect on the way that those students view law enforcement, the day-to-day interactions with the well-trained, committed law enforcement officer in their school that's doing the job the way it needs to be done.

Unfortunately, states don't have the resources. Localities don't have the resources to highly train their school resource officers and you can imagine a situation, and I've seen it, where a school resource officer is assigned to a school, a law enforcement officer that doesn't want to be there, is not in a mindset of their role - of their dual role as a law enforcement officer, but also as an individual that has to accommodate the many difficult challenges of being in a school environment with adolescents.

And that school resource officer can do a lot of damage. And as you might imagine, they've done nothing to engender respect for law enforcement. The solution, of course, is to provide the resources to the states and to the localities to properly train law enforcement officers.

That is the role of the Federal government and one of my recommendations to the Commission would be to look to training, look to best practices, look to the resources of the Federal government and see how they can get those resources down to the states.

In closing, let me just highlight another example of what we as prosecutors have been doing for years. Organically, the idea of veterans' courts has sprung up all over the country.

Judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys teamed together and recognized that their specific challenges with respect to veterans in the criminal justice system where - and the root of the

problem can be found in their service to the country - and they started veterans' courts as an alternative to the way the cases were normally handled.

And there wasn't funding for it, but they accommodated on their dockets and they saw great success. Congress just passed House Resolution 886. It's the Veteran Treatment Court Coordination Act and it provides that the Attorney General and the Department of Justice will develop standards and a funding mechanism to expand veteran treatment courts.

That's the example of how the government - the Federal government - can lead and I would just encourage the Commissioners to look to the ways that you can support local law enforcement, local prosecutors at the state and local level as we do our job which is just trying to keep our citizens safe. That's the conclusion of my comments. I appreciate the opportunity to speak and to respond and I'm happy to answer any questions at any later time.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Mr. Olsen, for your informative testimony today and certainly for your service to the State of Virginia. Our last distinguished guest for our state and local prosecutors' panel is Mr. Jonathan Blodgett - excuse me - who is the district attorney for the Essex County, Massachusetts. He is the chairman of the board for the National District Attorneys Association and the Addiction Policy Forum.

He was the first prosecutor in the country to serve on the executive committee of the National Association of Drug Court Professionals. District Attorney Blodgett has been a leader in confronting a range of issues including opioid epidemic challenges, domestic violence, human trafficking, auto insurance fraud, animal cruelty, and gun violence both through prosecution, diversion partnerships with schools, police, and community leaders.

He has served as president of the National District Attorneys Association and the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association. He's a graduate of Princeton University and Suffolk Law School. Thank you for joining us, Mr. Blodgett - excuse me - Mr. Blodgett, you're recognized.

Jonathan Blodgett: Thank you, Chairman Keith and all Commissioners. I am the district attorney of Essex County, Massachusetts and have been honored to serve 18-1/2 years in that role currently in my fifth four-year term. I would be remiss in the beginning of these remarks if I didn't thank Katherine McQuay and Theo Stamos for their hard work and assistance throughout this entire process. They have been fantastic.

I'd like to start by mentioning we've heard some very powerful testimony. I'd like to just go back to yesterday -- which General Mukasey spoke about how today narratives are often preferred to facts in many quarters -- and I think that was a very, very poignant observation.

The discourse is often misleading today and particularly so as it relates to local and state prosecutors. And I can speak with experience as to what I and many of my fellow district attorneys in Massachusetts, as well as, prosecutors nationally, do in our everyday job performance and duties.

In my home state in Massachusetts, although we investigate and prosecute all manner of crime, the only statutory mandate the district attorneys have is to investigate unattended deaths and homicides. And while local prosecutors handle 95% of the crime in the United States, as was just pointed out by my friend and colleague Eric Olsen, we do more than prosecute crime. We prevent crime.

We strive to be good community partners. We build relationships. We create policies and programs that constantly evolve to better serve our communities. And I will give two examples. In 2007, I created a drug diversion program modeled after my existing diversion programs being -

which are juvenile and youthful diversion. And the drug diversion program which I created provides treatment in lieu of prosecution.

The cases are run by health care professionals and clinicians. We're lawyers. We're attorneys. We don't have that background. So when we offer somebody drug diversion, again, in lieu of prosecution, we give it to the professionals. The part about this program which I consider to be most important is that any - every person who participates in our drug diversion program gets a 6-month treatment program minimum.

I've had people in the drug diversion program for two years. Insurance is not an obstacle. If you have insurance, that's fine. If you don't, it doesn't preclude you from being involved.

And when you complete your program successfully, again, determined by clinicians, your case is dismissed. People who are involved in helping those who suffer from the disease of substance use disorders have often told me that people sometimes fall five to six times during their treatment. We know it's not a situation that's easily remedied.

In our program, if that happens, we leave it to the clinicians to see if they want to reboot the treatment and if they can do that with the participant, they can stay in the program. I will tell you that to-date over 1,100 people have participated in the drug diversion program in Essex County and it's a program that, as I mentioned earlier, constantly evolves.

When I started this program, we offered it to our - two of our lower courts called, District Courts in my county in Massachusetts. Today, it's open to all the courts. We offered it to people 18 to 25. Today, there is no age restriction. And if you're willing to do the hard work of treatment, you have an opportunity to stay in the street and be successful.

A second program is the all-star program, which I created in 2016. Going back to what other speakers have spoken about today and yesterday, it's an example of collaboration, what we need in law enforcement.

It's involved the district attorney, the superintendent of schools, and the chief of police in one my biggest cities in my jurisdiction. It came about being at a conference in which one of the speakers, the superintendent of a large - of this large city that I mentioned, talked about how school adjustment counselor in her city identified over 200 kids who came from a family in which one or both parents suffered a substance use disorder.

And this program was about helping people suffering from substance use disorder, particularly opioids, and it hit me like a ton of bricks because while we focused on those people who were trying so hard and suffering from substance use disorder, we never really got into about the kids and the kids who suffer so greatly.

So I got together with my superintendent and my police chief and we said, "What can we do?" And we just put our heads together, collaboration, and we realized that most of these kids because of the high truancy rate weren't coming to school. They were hungry. They had undeserved shame, and they're suffering from trauma.

Almost all of them suffered from undiagnosed childhood trauma. So we developed a program, we reached out, we offered the kids food. I mean, how sad is that frankly? But we offered the kids food, a snack after school to have them come, and they did come.

And at first, it was difficult. They were looking at their sneakers and their shoes, they were in the gym, but after a period of time they were able to develop that trust with the school employees who volunteered for this program.

I was blessed to have a tremendous junior high school principal and guidance counselor who really embraced this concept. So we offered them a snack. We offered them after-school help with their homework. We provided counseling, the same organization that is involved in our drug diversion program to help kids.

We had peer support, recreational opportunities. The police who were there with us were trained by the clinician program to work with the kids. And we slowly built very trusting relationships with the kids. We started the program from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. every day - excuse me - twice a week. We had some initial success. We were able to increase that to a more small sort of truncated summer program to keep the kids in contact with each other.

And we recruited kids by telling them that we believe they were future leaders in their communities. We didn't want to single them out. We wanted them to know that we felt they had great potential. Since then, we've had four graduations involving over 300 kids. We have a waiting list of kids who want to be involved in the program, and they embrace it as we do.

Every year we have a holiday celebration in mid-year and in the last two years, the kids have brought their parents. Truancy is down, pride is up. I've been able to buy two washer/dryers -- which are in the home rec office of the school -- and kids were told that if they did their laundry they would get leadership points, which would help them towards the graduation, and they brought in their laundry.

Subsequently, they brought in the family laundry. So I'm just buying another washer/dryer for the school and I was able to put together enough resources to buy them a comfort dog.

And this program did receive national recognition from Addiction Policy Forum, which Chairman Keith mentioned I'm a member of. And when I was asked to give the keynote speech, I talked about the power of a washing machine and I was humbled and grateful to be able to do the

program, but these are the things that Eric Olsen and Commissioner Nancy Parr know that we do as we evolve constantly to serve our communities.

So yes, we prosecute crime. That's our job. But we do so much more. The last thing I want to just mention before I ask - give my recommendation to the panel is that crime victims in this country are being ignored.

I see the national debate and I know that when it comes to discussions about criminal justice reform, the loudest voices who demand reform never mention or use the word, "victim." We are the only ones in the courtroom who speak for victims and victims are the only ones in the courtroom who are there through no fault of their own.

And sadly, my observations the last 18-1/2 years is that the defendants have become the victims and the real victims have become invisible. My wish for this committee and for the Department of Justice is to be able to use whatever and all resources necessary to get the truth out to the public.

The public deserves the truth to know what we're really doing. That is the only way that the facts will then become more important than the narrative. I thank the Commission very much for the opportunity to speak and I'll answer any questions you have afterward. Thank you very much.

Phil Keith: Thank you, District Attorney Blodgett, for your valued testimony here today and certainly for your service to the State of Massachusetts and our country. Commissioners, we're now open for questions for our state and local prosecutor panelists.

Commissioners with a question, please state your name prior to your question and direct the question to a specific panelist or to all the panelists. Just as a reminder to our Commissioners, your mics are hot at all times. With that, Commissioners with questions for our panelists?

David Rausch: Director Keith, this is David Rausch.

Phil Keith: Commissioner Rausch, you're recognized.

David Rausch: Thank you. Thank you to each of the panelists for your testimony. It's very enlightening and spot on. I want to ask General Blodgett a couple of things. One is what I've heard from him is what I consider proper prosecutorial discretion and that is let the charges go forward and then find the solutions and what I'd be curious is how do you fund those programs that you mentioned that are so successful?

Jonathan Blodgett: So thank you, Commissioner. So I fund the programs in large part by my existing budget. I don't get additional monies from the state legislature. I have gotten a grant, a small grant, the last couple of years from the legislature and anti-drug grant, which I sent forward to the All-Star program, which I just mentioned for the kids.

The diversion program I have, I use my existing staff, I get a little bit of help from the state, but I do think it is the proper use of prosecutor discretion. I don't - it - we make the charging decision, Commissioner. If you have a de minimis and no record and it, you know - what brought you to the table here is an act that doesn't involve an act of violence, we're going to give you a shot. We're going to give you a break.

So I really don't receive any additional resources of note. I just felt it was the right thing to do and it was the right thing to serve my community.

David Rausch: Thank you.

Phil Keith: Other commissioners with questions?

Gordon Ramsay: Mr. Chair, this is Gordon Ramsay.

Phil Keith: Commissioner Ramsay, you're recognized.

Gordon Ramsay: I too want to thank the presenters today for your insight and sharing with the - sharing your views and some of the things you're working on. What catches my attention is the issues around diversion and treatment. The community outreach that you've had success with and community education to further expand on really what we're seeing is lack of understanding of how our criminal justice system works in today's world because we have lost the narrative.

I was wondering if anybody has any recommendations for the Commission regarding the items around the education piece and needs for funding for diversion treatment in that community outreach that was just discussed.

Phil Keith: General Blodgett, we will recognize you first to respond.

Jonathan Blodgett: Obviously, Commissioner, we would love to have more resources. The more resources we have the more we could do. No question about it.

The danger here as I see it is that diversion programs have to be run by the prosecutors because they involved charging decisions. You will make a decision off a diversion for, in my case, juvenile diversion, youthful diversion, drug diversion, you have to take that into consideration.

One of the things that have happened -- and I would call it sort of a troubling trend -- is that diversion has become - I mean, I've been doing this for 18 years. Diversion recently has become a really popular topic in some quarters and a lot of people want to get their hands on your diversion program.

And so do - it's okay to make suggestions, but sort of run it or be involved in those charging decisions and it doesn't work if you're not the entity because if we make a mistake we take, you know, responsibility obviously, but resources would be great.

I mean, I would love to incorporate things that I have into our veterans' courts and drug courts. I mean, we all supported as Eric had mentioned veterans courts and drug courts, but resources would be a fabulous thing and there's so much more that I know that I could do and I'm sure my fellow prosecutors throughout the country could do if we had more resources.

Phil Keith: Thank you. General Rutledge, your response?

Leslie Rutledge: Absolutely. And what I have found in my time as a prosecutor and having been the prosecutor for a drug court and my father being the former state drug director in the state helping to establish drug courts and now as the attorney general working with all of our prosecutors across the state, not only is important to have an engaged prosecutor

But in my humble opinion -- and not to be disagreeable -- but in my humble opinion what I have seen that works best is having judges who are extremely engaged and committed and treat these courts with their whole heart and the seriousness that they deserve.

When a judge is very engaged we see very successful alternative sentencing courts. Likewise, courts in Arkansas that have been the most successful are ones who have pre-adjudication versus post-adjudication for first-time or non-violent offenders.

And this is imperative as it relates to an individual having to take so many steps to remove a felony conviction off of his or her record and identifying themselves as a felon. Not that I'm a mental health expert; however, once an 18, 19, 20-year-old identifies him or herself as a felon, he or she, it's very difficult for them to overcome that if they don't have a great support system at home.

Likewise, I'm a fan of, to the extent that we can, is critical to engage our face-based communities with the success of these alternative sentencing courts or our opportunities to be involved in community outreach such as non-profit organizations because many of our friends, families and neighbors who are suffering from addiction or mental illness are craving something larger than themselves and to be a part of something larger than themselves.

And sadly they have just gotten lost along the way and it's our job and responsibility to help guide them so that way they can find who they are and be the best person, best community member and best citizen of our states and of our country.

Phil Keith: Thank you, General Rutledge. Mr. Olson, your response?

Eric Olson: I think the key is when there is a successful program and a successful movement that has empirical evidence that it works to go ahead and fund it.

I think the best example is the drug court movement. Again, that started organically in localities by judges as the attorney general pointed out, by committed prosecutors and forward-thinking prosecutors and it showed success. It's really the most successful drug diversion program that I have seen and that I have in my court system.

The way that works is if you want to start up a drug court, there's federal money that's available for the first two or three years to start that up and then it's handed off to the states to take over responsibility. That was successful as these were starting out.

Unfortunately, there's not enough funding now because everybody has seen the success of drug courts. Instead of having a dozen drug courts, we have two dozen and three dozen now. That pie has stayed the same size and so that means the existing drug courts get less and less money.

That is a way that the - a federal government, that the Congress and the president working together can assist criminal justice at the local level.

That is what I hope is going to happen with drug courts - I'm sorry - with veterans courts. That's why HR886 is all about to develop the method for funding drug - veterans courts and promoting drug courts among the states. The federal government's not going to be able to run them, but you certainly can provide the resources to do it. The key, of course, is not just to throw money at a problem. We've seen the danger of that time and time again.

And so I think the key will be to take the empirically proven successful programs and promote them and fund them to the extent that the - that Congress and the United States Federal Government can do that.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Mr. Olson. General Dunn, your response?

Barry Dunn: Thank you and thank you to Commissioner Ramsay for the question. I agree with my fellow panelists as to their responses. I'll also add that in Kentucky we believe in the data and I think the tracking of the numbers is so crucial both in the number of individuals who are diverted, the number of drug court cases, the number of people who re-offend.

All of those numbers are key especially as we approach our various legislatures to seek funding and also the federal government to seek funding.

Just as an example in Kentucky, we track these numbers and over about a 3-1/2 year period ending December 31st, 2019, we believe that what's called, Rocket Docket in Kentucky, has saved the commonwealth about \$117 million in local jail costs by diverted individuals who perhaps were first-time offenders from the felony court process through this Rocket Docket process where there was a quick mediation, a quick agreement, the individual was diverted,

engaged in a - certainly got a sentence of some type, but then also was allowed to try to get their feet back under them.

So we believe that following the data is crucial and that when we follow the data, save the - show the savings that can result by implementing these new types of programs we really see the benefit in them and we would urge the commission to look at those things as well and consider recommendations on funding such programs.

Phil Keith: Thank you, General Dunn. Other questions from commissioners?

Ashley Moody: Chairman, this is Ashley Moody.

Phil Keith: Yes, ma'am, you're recognized, General.

Ashley Moody: General Rutledge, so exciting to hear your voice on this call. General Rutledge and I are colleagues and she is an incredible representative of supporting law enforcement and had such great experience. Such an honor that you would give us your time today and testimony.

What I was hearing from you during your testimony is that you believe based on your experiences that trying to target those that are entering into the system early in their, let's say, career in crime we have a better chance of diverting them from that.

If we can keep them out of that system and keep them from getting those convictions on their record especially as it relates to drugs and what I was hearing from you - and I certainly experienced this as a judge - having the right judge oversee these diversionary courts at that critical moment when a conviction is hanging in the balance is essentially important.

And so if this Commission were to recommend more funding for these types of diversionary courts specifically related to drugs and we're going to outline characteristics of a jurist that we would recommend be sought out and placed in these positions by these judges when they're determining who to put in these positions for better effectiveness and success.

What would those characteristics be and to find the fact that it is prior to a conviction and maybe not on the back end, do you find that that is especially effective in requiring treatment, giving an opportunity for participants to complete certain objectives and course completions and drug treatment because they have that compelling reason which is to avoid a criminal conviction?

I saw many times in court many of the people that ended up in the court system were there because they had not had a family or friend or significant community influences that were helping them and pushing them and maybe holding them accountable.

And so having that diversionary court there to hold them accountable and push them along and having that threat that there could be a criminal conviction gave them that incentive, do you find that that is key?

Leslie Rutledge: Well, thank you, General Moody and great to hear from you as well and appreciate your service to the president and Commission. And to answer your questions, the characteristics of a great judge dealing with alternative sentencing courts.

First and foremost, honest, firm, but also to sound like one of the young people, someone who's real; someone who speaks directly with the individuals coming into his/her courtroom; who is empathetic and understanding that people do stumble and sometimes they stumble more than once; who is encouraging.

Oftentimes this - a jurist will be the only figure of authority that a defendant has come in contact with on such a personal, respectful level, since grade school, because again, they have perhaps lost their way along with junior high or high school, and not having that family and support structure at home.

And so the individual behind the bench in a robe is the first time someone of authority and respect has given them the same amount of respect as a human being. And I find that those judges who are really engaged with individuals coming through their alternative sentencing courts are the most effective because the defendants don't want to let that judge down.

And they will often, after they have successfully graduated and been able to obtain a job and to support their own families, will fight back to that judge as the reason why their life is turned around and how that judge believed in them when everyone else had given up on them.

But again, it's a firm hand - I just, as many of us were raised right with parents with firm hands and equally strong hearts. So for me, those are important characteristics of a jurist who is handling/overseeing this sort of caseload because we have to not only be in the business of saving money and decreasing our costs of incarceration, one of the most compelling reasons why alternative sentencing courts work is because it's in the business of saving lives. And these courts are effective at saving lives and getting individuals from a life of crime to a life of prosperity and purpose.

And that is why I am a proponent for those young and first-time offenders or non-violent offenders, to be in a pre-adjudication court versus post because it does encourage them to not be forever known as a felon and forever known as a criminal, but rather someone who messed up got caught and got his/her life turned around.

And I think that from again, my experience has been, and I know as a prosecutor and as the Attorney General, I understand the importance of convictions, and I understand the importance of holding people accountable for their actions. But I know as a human being, the importance of turning lives around and that sometimes everybody needs a second chance, particularly a young person or a first time offender.

Ashley Moody: Thank you, General Rutledge.

Phil Keith: Thank you, General Rutledge. Other commissioners with questions? Other commissioners with questions for our panelists? Hearing no further questions from our commissioners, we want to thank our distinguished panelists for joining us today and providing us valuable testimony and response to questions from this commission. On behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank you for taking the time out of your day to join us. Commissioners, we will now shift our focus to our police panel.

Our first distinguished panelist is Chief Hank Stawinski who is a retired Chief from Prince Georges County, Maryland. He began his law enforcement career in 1992 at the Prince George's County Police Department which serves 486 square miles and nearly 1 million residents along the Eastern border of Washington, DC. Prior to his appointment as Chief, he was responsible for the Bureau of Patrol to which approximately 1100 of the department's 1700 sworn members are assigned. He was named Chief in 2016.

Chief Stawinski holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Boston College and a Master's of Science in Management from the Johns Hopkins University. He is an alumnus with the Police Executive Research Forum Senior Management Institute for Police, the Major City Chiefs Association, and he's a member of the Police Executive Leadership Institute as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Executive Institute.

Chief Stawinski retired after 26 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Prince George's County. Thank you for joining us today, Chief. You are now recognized.

Hank Stawinski: Well thank you, Phil Keith, it is a tremendous privilege to be with yourself and my thanks to you; commissioners, my thanks for your work at this particularly troubling moment in our nation's life; and a special thanks to Laura Wyckoff who has most admirably, led the social problems working group that I was privileged to participate in as this process has moved forward.

Thank you for allowing me to address you regarding respect for law enforcement rule of law. And I'm going to limit my remarks to two fundamental challenges. I know there are a lot of issues, but there are two that are most critical in my view that serve, at this point, to erode public trust and as a result, respect for law enforcement. And by extension of that, calling into question the rule of law, fundamental to the health and prosperity of our nation.

I begin with the remarks of Justice Brandeis who said, that sunlight is the greatest disinfectant. We hear much in the public discourse about the blue wall of silence. And in my experience, this is not as it was just a decade ago. As a result of all of the experience that the Chairman was kind enough to enumerate for you.

So I won't touch on that again, I know that progressive and effective police executives in the United States, will not defend the indefensible. We are committed to accountability; we are committed to earning the public trust because we do not impose the law on the public, we enforce the law on behalf of the public.

However, in my view, we do have a cultural blind spot. From the very beginning of our work as police officers, our training, and our process of maturation, it's impressed upon us that we know things about our friends and neighbors, about members of our community, and we're not to repeat those things.

We don't discuss our work publicly. We're very closed-lipped about the things that we have access to. What we need, in my view, is at the point where these maturing officers reach the command rank, we need to evolve the concept because frankly, the public has a right to know what goes on inside the institutions that protect them.

And that's where my three-hour rule which I implemented when I became Chief in 2016, came from. Within three hours of any critical incident, my staff knew that I would be in front of the media providing public record information immediately and as much transparency as the law would allow me.

I don't think we fully understand or appreciate the way social media is impacting our society, but I've seen time and time again how social media whether we're talking about officers posting inappropriate comments, or community members posting perspectives on critical incidents, which have no basis in fact and have not been in any way accepted by the institution or public, but it changes the narrative.

And once that narrative is in place it becomes impossible to challenge. That's the genesis of the three-hour rule. But the next component of this challenge is that in many places, and the state of Maryland is where I'll speak to particularly, there are laws that prevent the release of records regarding internal investigations of bad actors in policing. In every profession, there are those who do not abide by the oath or the professional standards of that institution. And the same is true in policing.

I want to be clear, the vast majority of women and men, be they agents, troopers, deputies, or officers, abide by their oath and would rather come to harm than to do the wrong thing. But a handful, a handful do not wear that badge properly.

And where individuals are involved in confrontations where death or serious injury occurs, sexual assault, lying, destruction of evidence, or bias-based practices, I think the public has a right to know that. And that's why as the President of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association just this spring, I led the introduction of House Bill 1221 which would bring that sort of transparency.

Because right now that blue wall of silence that I alluded to, is individuals hiding behind the law and the public constructively concluding that police executives across the states and other places in our nation, are tacitly supporting or hiding when in fact, the law prevents us from being transparent and explaining - demonstrating to the public that these individuals are being held accountable. And let me end this portion of my remarks by saying transparency is also proactive. It's a difficult thing to engage in law enforcement in the United States of America in 2020.

And every opportunity that we have to have citizens have a front-row seat to Citizens Police Academy, Youth Systems Police Academy, a Pastors Police Academy, the Citizens Advisory Councils in every district and my own Citizens Advisory Council, those are the ways that relationships are formed.

And so that's where I'll conclude the first part and I'll move to the second because I know we have a limited amount of time. The second fundamental challenge, and here I'll look to the worker, Chris Argyris who spoke about single and double-loop learning in his work on learning organizations. He is a tenured professor at Harvard Business School.

A lot of the work that I did came out of Argyris's thinking. What Argyris said is that when you have something that's failing, we tend to just do more or do less of the thing until equilibrium occurs. What we must do, and this is double-loop learning, is question the underlying assumptions that have led to the failure. So crisis and confrontation is not the time to develop relationships. In my view is that policing in America has been the Easy Button.

You expand departments and you add additional training regarding the things that are becoming of greater public concern. Three particular examples, I'll use addiction, homelessness and mental illness. In the aggregate, I challenge anyone to advance an argument that policing and public safety in America doesn't have a larger footprint in the aggregate with respect to these critical issues, than all of the other service providers. And yet, we are enthusiastic amateurs in these endeavors.

Our goal is to prevent crisis and confrontation but we find time and time again, officers being called to deal with someone who is in crisis and again, our role is to restore the public order and peace. We should be focused on prevention. Now that's where we have to question those assumptions and we do that in three ways in my view. First, we must seek to prevent those confrontations and we do that using data.

And we do the prevalence whether it be individuals or places, to guide us to where we can get the greatest return on our public safety and our government, quite frankly, investment. Second, it all has to be done in a multidisciplinary fashion - police officers, patrol officers are not the people to be assessing again, using those three examples, issues of mental crisis, issues of addiction, issues of homelessness.

And then finally, respect is enhanced and earned in person. And in keeping with that notion that it's better to light a candle than to curse the darkness, I'll offer you some brief remarks about the Transform Your Neighborhood Initiative in Prince George's County. And the first thing I want to say about this is it doesn't cost anything but it always gets everyone's attention. It's about marshaling the resources you have and using them in innovative ways.

It briefly consists of an inventory, a first assessment using subject matter experts of every discipline, not just police officers. But we're talking here about infrastructure, public services, social services, fiscal, all of those various components of government involved in a real way.

The second critical assessment occurs with the community, having their support and their input into how this is done. All of that is reduced to a data point where geographic and issue-based questions are identified. And then we prioritize how we attack those issues and resolve them, again garnering credibility for law enforcement but also garnering credibility for government.

And police are uniquely positioned to do this work because of the relationship we have in the community. And then finally, and this is the key, coming to the capacity of the community to advocate for itself. The real benefit in all of this is that they understand fundamentally how the result - the questions that they have, the issues that they face are resolved and they have contact now on how to resolve infrastructure or social issues as opposed to 911 being the answer to everything.

Lastly, and here's where I'll conclude, use data to reallocate those budgets. And we hear now about de-funding policing. And I'm not advocating for de-funding policing. There are a lot of people in America, if people are going to be safe they're going to be safe because they have effective women and men protecting them from the bad actors, a handful.

And again, I - a prior panelist was saying that somewhere in this the victims have become the subjects of the criminal justice system as opposed to the community. The community is 98% of the equation here. The people who were out there doing the bad things is a handful.

Now, needs-based budgeting means that we can divert dollars based on the need, based on data. And that's the final outcome of the T&I process. Because everything that gets done and how it gets prioritized and resourced leads us to a place where we can analyze how we're allocating those dollars and we can expand or contract services community by community.

There is no cookie-cutter solution but where there is a greater need there can be greater funding. And where funding is being placed in areas where there is no need, then that funding can be reallocated. This is all deceptively simple, I will say that. And this is where I will conclude. I will again say thank you and I'm available to answer your questions.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Chief, so much for your testimony and certainly for your nearly three decades or exemplary law enforcement service. Our next distinguished panelist is Sheriff Bill Brown, who is the retired sheriff from the Santa Barbara County, California Sheriff's Department. He was first elected November 7, 2006, re-elected to a second term in June 2010, re-elected to a third term in 2014, and re-elected yet to a fourth term in June 2018.

Sheriff Brown began his law enforcement career in 1977 with Pacifica Police Department in the San Francisco Bay area. Sheriff Brown received his master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California in 1995.

Sheriff Brown currently serves as a regional representative and executive board member of the Metro County Sheriffs of America and Sheriff Brown is the past president of the California State Sheriffs' Association and a past president of the California Police Chiefs' Association.

He was president of the 91st Class of the Delinquency Control Institute and is a graduate of the Northwest Command College, the 169th Session of the FBI National Academy, and the 33rd Session of the FBI National Executive Institute.

Thank you for joining us today, Sheriff Brown. You are now recognized.

Bill Brown: Thank you, Chairman Keith. It's a pleasure to be with you and I just wanted to just let those who might be listening or reading this after this hearing is finished, I am still active as sheriff. I'm not retired at the moment.

Phil Keith: I'm sorry about that Sheriff.

Sheriff Bill Brown: That's all right. As this distinguished commission hits the homestretch on the important work that you are doing, I am struck by how significant an opportunity this is to be able to provide input to you. And I appreciate the invitation very much, especially at this moment in the history of our nation and in the history of policing and especially given how I feel about the law enforcement calling that I have devoted most of my life to answering.

There is a lot to process. But as the Commission does that and as our nation struggles with the events that have unfolded before it, and as policymakers rush to respond, it is worth remembering what our anchor is. No matter what the issue is; no matter how strong the feelings are; no matter how confident we may be in the solutions, there is one constant that we must always be mindful of and that is the rule of law.

The rule of law is more than just a collection of laws. It's a set of principles and ideals for ensuring an orderly and just society; an orderly and just America; a place where no one is above the law; where people are treated equally under the law; where everyone is held accountable to the same laws; and where there are clear and fair processes for enforcing those laws. The rule of law is the lifeblood of the type of society that we as Americans want to live in regardless of our differences.

Recent events in our nation have challenged the rule of law. Witnessing Mr. George Floyd's inhumane, painful, and unnecessary death, was horrifying and gut-wrenching for me. I also immediately realized that even though this reprehensible act took place 2000 miles away from us on the California coast, it would inflict damage on the relationships between many of our law enforcement agencies and communities of color.

George Floyd's unjust death drove many to action. The large numbers of peaceful protests that have occurred across our nation were extraordinary and they cannot be ignored. We in law

enforcement must always support and defend the rights of people to express themselves in those and other lawful ways.

But it is important that we make a distinction between peaceful protesters and those who looted businesses, vandalized property, attacked law enforcement officers, and burned down buildings. That type of lawlessness is never justified.

And it is equally important that Americans make a distinction between the vast majority of good cops who are brave and decent people willing to put themselves in harm's way to protect others no matter what their race, creed or color may be and the very, very small percentage of bad police officers who abuse their authority and engage in brutal or otherwise unlawful behavior.

And please don't get me wrong, just because cases like the unjustified killing of George Floyd are rare, doesn't mean that we shouldn't be concerned about them or shouldn't work as hard as we can, to prevent them. Quite the contrary. We must do everything we reasonably can do to stop anyone from dying so senselessly and so unnecessarily in the future.

Steps that can be taken toward that goal include enhanced law enforcement accountability and training in a variety of areas, particularly in an officer's duty to intervene if another officer is using excessive or unnecessary force. Police and members of all communities should also seek to better know, to understand, and to trust each other.

We need to cool the rhetoric, to come together and to reason with one another. We must build on old relationships and develop new ones. We need to listen more, talk less, and hold each other accountable. Above all, we must treat each other with dignity, with courtesy, and with respect.

Let me switch gears for a moment and address something that is I believe, having a terrible impact, a cumulatively terrible impact on our profession. And I'm talking about the propagation of bad cop videos that are displayed on the news and on social media.

And I'd like the Commission and everyone in the public, to consider this. There are more than 800,000 law enforcement officers in America. If each of them has on average, five encounters with members of the public every day and that's a modest average, that means that there are at least 4 million police and public interactions that take place every day.

If 99.9% of those encounters go well and only .1%, 1/10 of 1% are negative, that's still 4000 police/community member interactions that go poorly that occur each and every day. And if only 1/10 of those unprofessional encounters are captured on video either by body-worn cameras, dash cameras, surveillance cameras or by bystander cell phones, that means that there are still 400 bad cop videos that are captured across the nation every single day. Of those 400 videos there are likely to be some that depict questionable use of force incidents or other instances of police misconduct.

My point is that there is and there always will be, a steady supply of these videos that put law enforcement in a negative light. If America's media chooses to broadcast the worst of them day after day, night after night, what impression does that convey about the extent of the use of excessive force or other police misconduct? Broadcasting these videos ad nauseam shapes the impression that police brutality is pervasive, when in reality it is exceedingly rare, something that happens in only the tiniest fraction of encounters.

What other professions, if its members operated in public and wore body cameras or were constantly filmed as they did their work, could withstand that level of scrutiny? I ask you how many instances of medical malpractice by physicians that led to the death of or lifelong complications for patients would be captured on video?

How many instances of accountants cooking the books to avoid tax liabilities would be recorded?
How many lawyers, professors, politicians or even faith-based leaders would be videotaped engaged in unethical and/or illegal conduct?

The irony is that we in American law enforcement actually welcome the transparency that body cameras provide because we know that the vast majority of the time those videos bear proof that officers and deputies are doing the right thing. But those positive examples of video usually aren't the ones that are shown on the nightly news.

As America's law enforcement leaders, we must counter the false impression and the false narrative that is being conveyed by the incessant airing of the negative videos; the impression that America's policing system is rife with brutality, that it is inherently racist and that it is hopelessly broken.

All of these allegations are simply not true and we cannot let them stand. As members of law enforcement, we must speak out in the defense of our profession and of our people. American policing is not perfect. But it should not be de-funded, dismantled, or have its resources redeployed for the sake of politically expedient so-called reform.

Likewise, those who work in our agencies are not flawless because they are human. But we must work to make them the best that they can be. We must train and develop our people, hold them accountable if they do wrong, but we must also speak out in support of the 99.9% of deputies and officers who do what's right and who do what's just and who make a difference each and every day. We must continue to point out that what they do is why ours is such a noble profession.

True reform is improvement. And improvement is an ongoing business. There's a constant need for improvement in any life, in any profession, and in any nation. And I think that all law enforcement leaders should be, and most, in fact, are committed to reform.

If you're a law enforcement executive you're always looking for ways to improve your operation - to increase closure rates; to advance officer safety; to enhance community relations; and ultimately, to improve public safety in your community.

In this way, you are constantly reforming. But other types of so-called reform or reimagining can actually make those things harder to do. When a narrative is pushed that cops are the enemy of innocent law-abiding people, or that people should disengage from communities where crime rates are higher, or that people who commit certain crimes should not face punishment, then improvements are harder to achieve and the rule of law is threatened.

I continue to believe that the vast majority of people in all communities, appreciate what the men and women in our agencies do for them on a daily basis. Unfortunately, during this unique period in our history, the feelings of that large group of people are easily overlooked.

And in some cases, it is even hard for them to talk about their feelings without getting ostracized. Now is not the time for knee-jerk politically motivated reforms. We need to be in this for the long haul and to be committed to continuous reform, continuous improvement.

I am committed to that in my county as are my fellow sheriffs in the Major County Sheriffs of America. As this Commission finalizes its work and considers recommendations to help law enforcement and the communities we serve, I would encourage that those recommendations for improvement are accompanied by the proper funding and political support and will necessary to help implement positive change throughout our nation.

In closing, I would like to thank each of you for the important work that you are doing. And again, my deepest thanks for the invitation to be able to share my thoughts with you today.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Sheriff Brown, for your testimony here today and certainly, for your four decades of exceptional law enforcement service to our country. Our next distinguished panelist is Larry Cosme who is the National President of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association. Mr. Cosme is a retired special agent with Homeland Security Investigations, a division of the Immigration and customs enforcement in the Department of Homeland Security.

Mr. Cosme just started his federal law enforcement career in a legacy agency, Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1992. In 2005, he was elected to serve as the FLEOA Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency President. Also serving his second term is the United States president. He was elected to FLEOA National Vice President of Operations in September 2019. Mr. Cosme was elected to FLEOA National President and is currently serving a four-year term.

Mr. Cosme possesses a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from the New Jersey City University. He has attended training in management and labor relations at Rutgers University. He received training from the Federal Mediation and Reconciliation Services in dispute resolution. Thank you for joining us today, Mr. Cosme, you are recognized.

Larry Cosme: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Commission members. Thank you for having me here today and affording me the opportunity to testify before the commission. We talked about my background. I want to talk a little bit more about that. As I served my nation as a federal law enforcement officer most recently as a special agent with Homeland Security's investigations.

I took an oath back 27 years ago during the course of my career to uphold the Constitution and serve our country proudly and to protect all Americans. And to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the laws passed by Congress.

And I did this, I did not choose which laws to enforce or which to shrug off and ignore. My colleagues and I were held accountable to the adherence of these obligations daily by management and by federal prosecutors and the courts. I offer this on background because of certain respects our nation's heritage is one governed by the rule of law is under current seige. Not by the federal government, by their range of state and local actors who unilaterally decide to simply shrug off those laws with which from time to time are most politically expedient to ignore.

We have explicitly seen all too often many local prosecutors failing to adequately charge violent felons for range of crimes including assaults on law enforcement officers. But where it's most egregious is the states and localities that have developed so-called sanctuary jurisdictions or cities in noncompliance with federal immigration laws and border security and working with immigration officials.

And these jurisdictions have enacted policies that prohibit immigration authorities or local law enforcement from cooperating with the local law enforcement authorities. And actually, in some states, it's a criminal, it's been criminalized where local law enforcement officers cooperate with immigration authorities, they could be criminally charged.

And in some other areas, federal law enforcement has worked successfully with your state and local counterparts to keep communities safe and I want to touch upon this because it's really important. You have the Federal Bureau of Investigation's joint terrorism task forces, the US Marshals strategic task forces, and the DEA's organized crime drug task forces and other DHS and ATF task forces that work collectively with state and local law enforcement, and historically, outweigh the political positions except for the nation's immigration laws.

And I mentioned that like one case I cited in my written testimony where Mr. Florez Huminez, who was sentenced to seven years in federal prison for possession with intent to distribute 50 kg of

methamphetamine and was the leader of a drug trafficking organization distributing large quantities of methamphetamine in the state of Georgia to other drug trafficking organizations located in central Florida during a period of time between April 2017 and September 2018.

Federal law enforcement, the DEA, and local law enforcement, and County law enforcement leaders, and state law enforcement leaders join together to investigate this individual and were successful.

And that's where the cooperation of state and local law enforcement and federal law enforcement is important. Regardless of the individual's immigration background and that's important and that's also going to the rule of law, where your Commission's hearing today is all about and respectable enforcement, it's important that we all respect everyone's authorities whether it's federal, local, or state law enforcement and work collectively for the same mission on protecting our communities.

And this is obviously a success were joint operations work successfully by working together and they were able to enforce the law collectively here in the US. And some folks have problems sometimes listening to the criminal aliens when they are referred to aliens. But I want to be clear. When a person is referred to as a criminal alien, this is an individual that is convicted of a crime in the United States or elsewhere where it's a similar penal code deemed here in the US a crime for that conviction.

So I want to be clear on that because sometimes the false narratives that some individuals push -
- a criminal alien is a criminal just like any police officer that charging a human being, and whether they're a citizen, a resident, or a resident alien, that individual is a criminal.

So watching the rule of law ignored and abandoned, this is where these individuals become victimized and the state politicians see federal law enforcement laws as political lens instead of a

public safety lens. And that's where we need to refocus our efforts is let's take the politics out of the enforcement, enforcing the law, both on the state, local, and federal level. It doesn't matter what kind of law you are enforcing.

And it's important that we focus on that. Because by not focusing on that, then we have that's where you created a vision in distress between the federal law enforcement community and the state and local law enforcement community.

And that's important work. It goes back to the respective law enforcement overall because that way it's painting a false narrative in a misguided narrative across the board. Obviously, the US immigration laws are laws that were created by Congress dating back to the 1700s and there have been changes over the course of many years on these laws and most recently in 1986, they had some changes that were instituted.

And that is something that I recommend as a leader of the Federal Law Enforcement Officer Association that Congress needs to work on fixing some of these laws, moving forward because it's important to protect our borders both on the front lines and both in the interior of United States.

Therefore it makes the job of the police officers in the communities that they serve a lot easier because then you are tackling other law enforcement problems and other criminal problems on the border and in the interior US. Therefore, the local jurisdictions do not have to deal with these problems and the law both in the local jails in the state prisons. And that's important.

Moving forward, in our view, a lot of the federal law enforcement officers well trained and capable of executing their missions under the existing federal laws and follow it without regard to political or personal opinions. Despite politicians in many jurisdictions that they serve in demonizing these

protectors to impede their main mission to protect the public and secure the United States. This impacts our national security and clearly violates the rule of law established by the federal code.

These unlawful actions create a dangerous dynamic that localities punctuate with policies that clearly violate the federal law like I talk about earlier in creating the sanctuary cities and then also releasing criminal aliens from local jurisdictions or state prisons without notifying federal immigration authorities when they have immigration detainers placed on them.

And I want to cite one instance where that was not applicable where there was a detainer lodge, and immigration detainer against an individual that's a criminal alien, foreign national that was a local city jail in Washington State. This individual was released without the notification of immigration authorities and was subsequently arrested in January of 2018.

Ramos Ramos is the last name that's cited in my written testimony and again booked in a local county jail for the crime of murder. And this is why it's important that there's cooperation with state and local jurisdictions with the federal authorities that we represent.

That way it makes it easier for the enforcement of federal laws whether it's immigration laws, gun laws, drug laws, like the epidemic that we are having here in the US with the opioid crisis. And I heard some folks talking about it earlier. I also want to mention something that's really important because it was highlighted in the 9/11 commission report where it talks, the green light laws were some jurisdictions throughout the United States specifically the state of New York, they've allowed illegal aliens and criminal aliens also without the ability of the state to check their backgrounds to possess driver's license.

And these individuals have no ability to validate the process of these IDs that are accepted as valid in that state. That clearly impedes federal immigration enforcement actions and creates a barrier between federal and state jurisdictions. It also inhibits the immigration authorities to

access state databases including motor vehicle and information or criminal arrest information for these individuals. They are posing a threat to the law enforcement officers that we represent when they're executing a search warrant order or an arrest warrant on areas that have these green light laws.

In some jurisdictions, they penalize law enforcement officers who cooperate with federal immigration authorities and that's something that can the rule of law we cannot permit because these sanctioned cities, they sanction the officers or discipline them for just making a mere phone call on a traffic stop for an individual that has an outstanding immigration warrant. That's totally unacceptable and that goes against the rule of law.

So when we recommend is clearly outlined in our recommendations is to have your Commission work them into Congress to undertake a review of all federal immigration laws in existing immigration visa process and an act sections where the updated laws are the most coincide with national policy and strengthening penalties for these same laws.

And also an act jurisdiction should enact sanctuary jurisdiction laws and place convictions in these jurisdictions that don't cooperate with federal authorities. And also, inform these jurisdictions that state and local databases tied into federal databases like NCIC or received federal funding should be compelled to federal law enforcement officers access to them as far as for security, operational security. And then the rest are clearly outlined in my testimony.

And I also want to make sure that we looked out for the victims of the crimes that have been committed by these criminal aliens and everyone fails to talk about when they're talking about the narrative of immigration and criminal aliens and border security. We need to worry about the crimes that these individuals are committing against these victims.

The victims are the true crimes of these criminal aliens are the ones that we need to focus our attention to. And the federal law enforcement community and the state and local law enforcement community. And I want to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify here today and inviting me to testify before your Commission. And I will be here for the remainder of the time to answer questions. Thank you.

Phil Keith: Thank you Mr. Cosme for your service and certainly for your testimony here today. The next distinguished panelist is Lieutenant Mark Young from the Detroit Michigan Police Department. Lieutenant Young began his career in law enforcement with the Detroit Police Department in May 1987, has been steadily promoted since he joined the force.

In addition to his commitment, as a law enforcement officer, he is also president of the Detroit Police Lieutenants and Sergeants Association, which has a membership of 625 members representing members holding ranks of detective, investigator, sergeant, and lieutenant. Lieutenant Young is also the current Vice President of the Association of Membership of the National Association of Police Organizations.

Lieutenant Young holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Cleary University where he graduated with honors. He holds numerous training certificates in law enforcement. We thank you for joining us today, Lieutenant Young. You are recognized.

Mark Young: Thank you, sir. Chairman Keith, Executive Director Kueter, and distinguished members of the Commission. Thank you for inviting me and allowing me to speak about a profession that I'm so passionate about. I think it's the greatest profession of all. In order to be brief, please refer to my written statement for more details and additional recommendations.

I would first like to address the unique situation that we find ourselves in with the coronavirus pandemic and the new challenges to rule the law as it has brought. Activist, judges, prosecutors

and defense attorneys and others have managed to begin clearing out our nation's prisons and jails population under the guise of compassionate relief.

They claim to protect inmates from contracting COVID-19 by granting them early release is protecting public safety, but that is truly not the case. The compassionate and early release of inmates as a response to the coronavirus pandemic is negatively affecting public safety especially at a time when social services and public safety are already stretched thin due to the health and economic crisis our country is currently facing. Essential services across the country are struggling to serve communities due to the lack of sufficient staff, funding, and facilities.

Police departments in areas hardest hit by the virus like Detroit, have been decimated and officers by officers contracting the virus being sent home quarantine, and on top of this, the continuing protests due to the response of the tragic death of George Floyd.

The broad release of inmates as a response of this virus does not take into account the need for the broader public safety system nor the community. Now is not the time to circumvent the normal process of inmate release. This has placed an undue and unique burden on resources and putting our communities at greater harm and risk.

In Wayne County where I live, the Wayne County Jail released over 430 inmates between March 10 and April 7. Those inmates, those are inmates that the offices that I represent risk their lives to arrest and taken. In Washington DC, 11-year-old Devon McNeil was shot and killed at a July 4th antiviolence picnic. One of the suspects, Christian Wingfield was released from jail from a DC jail on May 27, May 22 in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Wingfield will be held in jail awaiting trial on two charges -- felon and possession of a firearm and possession of a large capacity ammunition feeding device. He is not the only violent felon released in response to the pandemic that resulted in tragic consequences.

The knee-jerk reaction to a temporary but serious health crisis is going to have a long-lasting negative impact on our community for which the benefit clearly does not will outweigh the cost. Just because someone may be categorized as a low risk due to their current charges, does not mean they are not dangerous individuals and continue in a continuing threat. How Wingfield was designated low risk is beyond my comprehension.

Further, the mass release of inmates whether in response to the public health emergency or under the guise of criminal justice reform, has not been coupled with safeguards, support, resources to the state and local services that would be necessary for communities to handle the influx of newly released prisoners.

While prison reform has led to lower prison populations and some budget savings, it has resulted in an increase of stress on local and county budgets and resources, not to mention the economic cost of the victims on the properties.

And I love talking about the victims because they are the true victims of what's going on here. While we support true second chances that bring about the productive return of prisoners to the communities. We oppose raw inmate relief policies that harm public safety.

Such significant changes should first be thoroughly examined and must include the input of federal, state, and local public safety communities which play an intricate role in the system. Further, each year millions of dollars in federal grant money go towards state and local pretrial relief programs. These programs which may in many cases may serve repeat dangerous criminals to operate with little oversight putting public safety at risk.

I want to talk about a couple of cases real quick to expedite the time. In Detroit, we experience a lack of prosecution. We have experienced our work has been shelved by our prosecutor and

often many Detroit cops feel like it's so Wiley Coyote Road Runner show. It's not a game the work that we put in here.

The criminals are getting multiple bites at the apple to offend and law enforcement are at additional risk having to recapture the offender at a time when every use of force actually is being scrutinized and misinterpreted.

A recent incident in Detroit perfectly exemplifies what officers are dealing with on the streets. Detroit police officers were attempting to arrest is subject on July 4th that killed three people and wounded five. While making the arrest, bystander, Hakeem Littleton, decided to intervene and took a handgun from his pocket and fired point-blank at the head of one of the officers. Thankfully, he was a terrible aim and we were not mourning another officer that was killed in the line of duty. Detroit police Chief James Craig released the body footage that stopped the rally cry of a false case of police brutality.

The situation police have found themselves in is untenable. An individual who attempted to kill a police officer has greater sympathy than officers that are risking their lives to protect their community. Unfortunately, the mindset needs, this mindset needs to change.

The lack of prosecution of suspects has threatened to harm great communities such as Detroit. Too often prosecutors have ignored and otherwise eagerly dismissed charges on defendants that are arrested by brave and dedicated law enforcement. I will and by reiterating a couple of points.

Several of the National Association of Police Officers points and a couple of my own. They need to enact a national standard for protecting officers' due process and guidelines for opening for openly processing citizens' complaints. Respect for law enforcement must include respect for officers due process rights both workplace and critical incidents. Increased penalties for those, for

assault and murder of law enforcement officers. The public must know that the government supports our officers and will stand with them for assaults against them.

Also, educate the public on “comply and complain” to ensure confrontations and obstructions in police encounters decline. I will make these viewpoints and I will and. Schools for our kids are safe, but prisons are not. In Detroit, homicides are up 30%, nonfatal shootings are up 50%. We don't need any help with compassionate release.

What kind of message are we sending to the law enforcement officers who risk their lives and ultimately give the ultimate sacrifice to arrest these violent perpetrators?

What kind of message are we sending to witnesses and victims that come forward? We are seeing bonds of one dollar or personal bonds for violent offenders. They are walking out the door just as quick as we can finish our police reports. The message we are sending to the criminals is that you are granted a second opportunity to offend our unsuspected society. Also, if you do decline we should be sending this message. If you do decline, you should be prepared to do the time.

I appreciate the opportunity to share these thoughts with you. I'm happy to answer any questions. I appreciate the opportunity you granted me beyond belief because right now these are unprecedented challenges that the great men and women of law enforcement face and I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Male: Thank you, Lieutenant Young for your testimony here today and certainly for your service to law enforcement.

Mark Young: Thank you, sir.

Phil Keith: Thank you. Our last distinguished panelist for our police panel is Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo. He was sworn into office November 30th of 2016 and he leads the department of 5300 sworn officers and 892 civilian support personnel in the fourth largest city in the United States. As the first Hispanic to lead the Houston Police Department, Chief Acevedo brings a unique understanding to the concerns of diverse communities in Houston.

Born in Cuba, he was four years old when he immigrated to the United States with his family in 1968. Chief Acevedo subsequently grew up in California and earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Public Administration from the University of La Verne, California. Chief Acevedo began his law enforcement career with the California Highway Patrol in 1986, rising through the ranks to become Chief in 2005.

Before joining the Houston Police Department, Chief Acevedo served nine years as police chief for Austin Texas Police Department from 2007 to 2016. He is currently the president of Major Cities Chiefs Association. Thank you for joining us today, Chief. You are recognized.

Art Acevedo: Thank you for the opportunity to testify today before the presence of Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. I really want to do a special thanks to Katie Sullivan and you, Director Keith and Chief Ramsay my coworker there on Major Cities Chiefs for being a Commissioner.

My name is Art Acevedo. And I am appearing here today before you as both the chief of police of Houston Texas and as president of the Major Cities Chiefs Association or MCCA. It's my honor to be here and (inaudible) intend to focus on the trend of diminished respect for law enforcement and the laws that we all enforce. Let me just start off by saying I agree with just about everything that was previously said by the members of this panel, Hank and Lieutenant, and everyone that was on.

A lot of really good points, and I would adopt a lot of them for myself. There is really no easy solution to these challenges. Your respect to the rule of law begins with fairness and equity. And this really is going to require us to work on transparency that goes well beyond law enforcement and encompasses the criminal justice system.

Our system is extremely complex and deeply interconnected. Although police is probably the most visible aspect or cog, we are just one. We need to really work on what's going on with the courts, judges, prosecutors, probation, and parole, just to name a few of the cogs that we need to deal with.

The system-wide transparency, Commissioners, is long overdue. We are rightfully the most scrutinized in law enforcement by the public. The public really needs to and has a right to know what goes on behind closed doors relative to the actions taken by judges and district attorneys.

One of the areas that I want to talk about is bail reform. You know, we in law enforcement believe that bail reform is appropriate. Bail reform is one of the most significant however contentious elements of the criminal justice reform debate in my opinion, in our opinion. We are all familiar with the inequity of holding pretrial offenders in jail simply because of the socio-economic status and no way to make bail.

Common sense reform is something that we support and need to provide a way to nonviolent offenders who pose minimal risk to public safety. We think the reform is achievable, but we have seen local government activists across this nation take it way too far. I think I've already heard some of the examples and I will give you some further examples of what's going on.

There are those that believe that no one should be held pre-conviction and they are used in the Constitution as a method to promote this disingenuous position. Here's some of the examples. A

convicted sex offender was out on bond for a continuous sexual abuse of a child in Harris County where I'm from, was recently arrested for murder and kidnapping in Southwest Louisiana.

He had been accused at shooting, he has been accused of shooting and killing a 17-year-old girl and an 18-year-old boy and kidnapping of 14-year-old. A New York City career criminal is being held on bail for skipping a court date and grand larceny and criminal possession of stolen property case prior to being released pretrial yet again.

Since his release, he's been rearrested for burglarizing a newsstand, four separate drug offenses, and grand larceny where he snatched the purse of a 70-year-old elderly female, who has only been able to continue his crime spree because despite his lengthy criminal history, he was repeatedly released pretrial after being arrested for each of his additional offenses.

Also in New York, a convicted - multiple convicted felon was arrested for rape. While the case didn't move forward due to an uncooperative complainant, he was held on a parole violation until being granted an early release. Six days after his release, he robbed a nurse coming home from working at a local city hospital. Within 10 days of his release, he dragged a 58-year-old woman to a secluded area and raped her.

As of May 2020, in Washington DC, there were 23 accused of gun-related homicides on pretrial release. Data on shootings in the district supports the notion that not enough gun violent offenders are being held in custody. Compared to the same period last year, there has been a 17% increase in the number of shootings and 31% increase in gun-related homicides in DC.

To prevent future stories like this one, I just highlighted the Major Cities Chiefs Association supports putting in a risk-based system to determine pretrial release eligibility especially for violent offenders and repeat or chronic offenders.

The criteria of the assessment we believe should be informed by a combination of the social scientists, mental health professionals, and criminal justice experts. At a minimum, it should not take it should take into an account the crimes committed, the public safety threat posed the proclivity for reoffending, the risk of flight, and the accused individual's entire criminal history.

Such a system we believe would bring about a more informed approach based on science and evidence and take the politics out of determining pretrial detention status. Across this nation for too many social justice advocate prosecutors have been making these decisions based on political opinions and biases, not what is in the best interests of the safety of our communities and most especially, our victims and witnesses.

The capacity of the system has been exceeded I believe quite frankly by design that some of the same elected officials that wanting everybody run free pre-conviction also not investing in the courtrooms and judges and prosecutors and defense attorneys creating a crushing caseload and backlogs, thereby it's almost impossible to fulfill current legal and ethical obligations.

Let me give an example in Harris County again, in which Houston is in the middle of. We have over 1500 suspects charged with murder that have yet to be trialed. That's 1500 and sadly a significant number of them are running free to re-offend, commit additional murders, commit additional aggravated assaults with bond as low as personal bond, \$100 bonds, and \$1000 bonds.

You can imagine what impact this has on witnesses and victims and their willingness to actually come forward. Indigent defendants are the ones who suffer the most from the shortcomings in terms of the lower-level offenses. You must remember this sixth amendment in part entitles everyone to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury.

We need to increase again our investments in the prosecutorial court system, specifically for more prosecutors, public defense attorneys, and courtrooms. Let me just talk briefly about funding as local, state, and federal officials address these issues such as homelessness, mental health and addiction responding to these challenges sadly is falling on the shoulders of law enforcement. Despite the increase in responsibilities and our responsibilities, budgets continue to be strained and actually cut across the nation.

There has been increasing calls to defund and structurally reorganize the police and quite frankly, the already seen in New York, Los Angeles and other cities where because of the political winds, cuts have been made without any regard to the impact on the community, the impact on public safety. In Houston, we average 1.2 million calls for service annually.

These calls disproportionately originate from disenfranchised communities and I along with other Major Cities Chiefs Association members are consistently heard from our communities despite all of the call for defending the place that they want better policing not less policing.

So we believe it's imperative, Commissioners, that we properly fund police departments to so we can invest in technology increases this transparency and accountability like body-worn cameras and recruit police officers who were serviceman professionals and most important, train our folks on an ongoing basis on explicit bias cultural competency de-escalation and tactical training.

Let me talk briefly about morale. I promise I'm almost done. Morale and law enforcement -- I've been around for 34 years and it's the lowest that I think any of us who have been around have seen for a myriad of reasons including COVID-19, civil unrest, lawlessness, the lack of consequences for criminal behavior, and the vilification by the public and elected officials of the men and women of law enforcement.

We cannot forget as others have stated, the overwhelming majority of our police officers of America are good people and faithful public servants who put on their uniform on every day willing to make the ultimate sacrifice and actually make the ultimate sacrifice to the people they were sworn to protect and serve.

These brave men and women are second to none as imperfect as we are and they richly deserve our support. We must all put down the broad brushes start judging each other for the prism of content of our individual hearts and actions and not for the prism of color or the uniform we wear.

Mutual respect and trust because law enforcement in public is crucial of good policing. Building and maintaining that trust and respect is a never-ending effort that requires striking a balance obviously between upholding the law while showing compassion and assisting those in need.

It's crucial at this time especially in our nation's history that law enforcement always acts with professionalism, even when we are taking actions that may be in unpopular. It's much easier I believe to navigate a crack in the public trust law enforcement and knows your concerns will be taken seriously.

Let me just say, relational policing for us is something we don't just talk about. We don't just talk about relation police, it's really about engaging in relational police which is the best method to build a strong bond with the community and law enforcement. We treat every encounter, all of us must treat every encounter between law enforcement and the community as an opportunity to connect or establish a positive impression at least for the lifelong trust and relationship.

Faithful community engagement is dependent on being present as though we can't build trust from behind a desk or via memo or via press release. For example, we spent a lot of time with working with activists. We spent time working with our community leaders including Truth and

Bumpy and other rap artists that are actually real respecting the community and we work together to navigate these challenging times and will continue to do so.

I will just conclude by saying it remains a challenging time for law enforcement executives and especially our men and women on the front lines. We are having to balance the equitable law, support officers' well-being, safety continues to build community trust, accountability has to be a two-way street. We must hold ourselves to a high standard but the men and women in the criminal element that victimizes our community, they, too, must be held to a high standard.

And again, I will hope that as we move forward, we find a way to bring transparency to what's going on with her courtrooms and judges that are placing communities at risk by allowing violent offenders to run amok out there, run free that they are turning a mockery into a criminal justice system.

And the same holds true as it relates to district attorneys. So I look forward to the conversation, and I again want to thank Katie Sullivan) and Director Keith for your leadership and for everyone that's serving on this panel and this Commission.

Phil Keith: Thank you Chief Acevedo for your testimony today and certainly for your nearly four decades of service and leadership to our country. Yes, sir. And just as a note, commissioners, Chief Acevedo has a pressing schedule today so he may have to drop off the call. Commissioners, we are once again open for questions for our police panelists.

Commissioners with questions please state your name prior to your question and direct the question to the specific panelist or to all panelists. Just as a reminder, commissioners, your mics are hot at all times. We will now entertain questions from commissioners to our panels.

Frederick Frazier: This is Commissioner Frazier. I would like to address something with Chief Acevedo if he is still on here.

Art Acevedo: Yes, I'm on.

Frederick Frazier: Chief, I know you and I go way back. I was want to say thank you for what you do and how outspoken you are. And I guess that's my question. You've been probably the most prolific person in law enforcement as a chief that criticizes what's going on in the criminal justice system especially with the DAs and the prosecution that's going on in Harris County. We are seeing it all over the country. How can you get more of your peers to do the same and use that as an example of how these folks, like an easy example, a capital murder suspect I got last week when I got his bond was \$25,000.

And so one of the guys arrested him this morning, the second time we arrested him in six months, now on a murder case. What do you say that those cases those peers how do we get them on board on your level to start following your footprint of what you are doing and first of all thank you for what you are doing because you don't hear it enough.

And you know you and I are your friends, but I respect how you handle it and how you go after them and I just want to see more folks in your position take that approach and go after the DA, the prosecutors in the system that is failing all of criminal justice right now.

Art Acevedo: well thank you very much for your support and your friendship. I can tell you that Major Cities Chiefs, we are starting to do it a lot more. We are organizing more. I would recommend that one of the things I did in Harris County is I got together with all of our elected constables, Sheriff's office, and police chiefs and we had press conferences or press conference to put the heat on folks. But I think several folks talked about emptying out jails.

They tried in Harris County. Believe me, because of our pressure we were able to stop it because you know that we've done misdemeanor bail reform in Harris County and there's hardly anybody, but there's hardly no misdemeanors left. But they were about to release several thousand including murderers and we stopped it. But I think you've got to get people Commissioner Frazier from a regional approach that can create some safety for the individual chiefs.

The last thing I'll say and that is that I think our criminal justice system as it relates to police executives, it's a bad system. Police chiefs quite frankly are afraid to lose their job and we are seeing that they're dropping like flies which is no fault of their own ever since the George Floyd death. LA has got the best -- I believe the best model in the country and that's two five year terms and you're done. And unless we can find a better model where police chiefs feel some safety, you won't get as many taken out as you should.

Phil Keith: Thank you, Chief. Other questions from Commissioners? Well hearing no further questions, let me close by thanking our panelists once again for your time and your most valuable testimony and response to the questions from our Commissioner. On behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank each of you. We are grateful for your testimony today. Commissioners, now it's my honor to introduce the 75th Attorney General of the United States, the Honorable Edwin Meese III.

General Meese has graciously agreed to join us today to provide us the closing remarks as we conclude the hearing portion of the teleconferences. General Meese has continued a quarter of a century formal association with Heritage Foundation as the lead think tank of Ronald Reagan's Distinguished Fellow Emeritus. He oversees special projects and acts as an ambassador for the Heritage within the conservative movement.

He was Chairman of Heritage's Center for Legal and Judicial Studies from its founding in 2001 until what he calls his semi-retirement February 1, 2013. The legal center now bears his name in

recognition of General Meese's contribution to the rule of law and the nation's understanding of constitutional law.

General Meese served as Attorney General during President Reagan's second term it is most appropriate that he is with us here today as we close our hearings on the rule of law. General Meese, we are indeed honored to have you join us today and you are recognized. General Meese?

General Meese: Hello, this is Ed Meese.

Phil Keith: Good afternoon, General Meese. We have introduced you to our Commissioners and we are so indebted to have you join us today. It's an honor to have you join our Commission's call today. And with that, we will turn the floor over to you.

General Meese: Okay, thank you very much. I appreciate this opportunity to visit with your Commission and to say just a few words. I certainly have been impressed with both the background and the accomplishments of the Commission members and very much impressed by the variety of experience and expertise that has been shown by the witnesses.

I was going to say appeared before you, but I guess it would be appropriate to say who have part in - participated in your activities. Fifty-five years ago, President Lyndon Johnson launched the earlier Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. And in 1967, they rendered their report, which launched a number of innovations and new concepts in public safety and crime control.

I was very much involved in that report because I have had the privilege of being the first head of the state planning agency from California that implemented any of the ideas of the commission

set forward. Today your commission has no lesser task and perhaps in even more urgent and complex climate in which to carry it out.

The importance of your task is accentuated by the subject that you have been discussing at the hearing this week. That is respect for law enforcement and the rule of law. The headline in the newspapers and TV news programs have certainly illustrated the numerous situations that we face not only in the overall aspects of our government generally, more specifically the incessant attacks on police and the other institutions of government particular those involved in criminal justice.

We've had the stories obviously each night now of widespread rioting, vandalism and violence in some of our cities. And we have vicious campaigns taking place to defund, dismantle and even disarm the police. Unfortunately, the leadership in support of these threats to public peace have come from some of the elements that we normally would expect to promote and protect our communities and civil society.

And in these cases, we have institutions such as the university and colleges the news media and political leadership where we have not only an animosity but also direct encouragement of those forces which are on the opposite side of peace in our communities. Three examples of these resources recently came to my attention.

I have been amazed at the anti-police animosity which is recently been contributed on so many campuses. They range from explicit denunciation of law enforcement agencies and police officers to a more subtle influencing of student attitudes towards the way in which the law is enforced.

For example, at George Washington University here in the District of Columbia, we had a situation of actually and this is what I mean by subtle influences, they had the sociology department sent emails out to criminal justice students apologizing for offering students the

opportunity to participate in a virtual job fair for careers in law enforcement. The idea being that they come out offended the students just by thinking that they might consider a career in policing.

Likewise, you had situations where since the police themselves have been attacked on the campuses and there are movements on many campuses now to totally take away the campus police and instead turn it over to some sort of unarmed social workers.

We've also seen from the standpoint of the news media if they regulate the present derogatory picture of police activity. For example, the Washington Post again here in the nation's capital, recently devoted nearly a full page to simply a message was that essentially, police lie to reporters and to the public and therefore anything they say about what happened at a crime scene or situation should be taken with more than just a grain of salt.

And so as a result, you have that institution again being the opposite of presenting an accurate picture of what goes on. And finally, we have a situation where in light of all that is going on today, in terms of some of our larger cities, we have the rioting and the violence and that sort of thing. In places like Portland and Seattle, even in New York City, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

And instead of supporting and promoting and providing resources for law enforcement, the two million of the political leaders, the mayors and other local government leaders, failed to support the police or actually inhibit the protection of life and property by ordering police to stand down or limiting the way in which they can participate in the lawful and peaceful attempts to maintain law and order.

They also have in many ways just recently now in the forthcoming fiscal year, have massive cuts in police budgets at a time where if anything police need more resources rather than less, particularly in the face of what they are having to view in terms of overtime and the like.

We also have a serious problem within many of our counties with district attorneys who have run for and financed by those who have a different agenda than the normal ideas of law and order under the Constitution. And as a result, we have no support for police and the fact that in many cases, they will not even prosecute many crimes or prosecute them as high much lower level than the incident deserves.

Obviously the correction of these forces of destruction cannot be accomplished by the police alone. But is certainly the police have a responsibility and an opportunity to take the lead trying to provide a situation in which the public themselves can become aroused and be willing to take necessary action in order to try to persuade these various forces that I mentioned of the importance of a well-funded, well resources and well-supported law enforcement agencies.

The police certainly must do everything they can to gain public support and lead the way in bringing out the best in our communities. In that regard, I've been impressed with the scope of the hearings that you've had in the working groups that your Commission follows. The fact that you have spent a lot of time on what I call the professionalization of police. And that is the fact police officers their well-being, their training and the support they receive.

The idea of community engagement -- all these things are extremely necessary. One of the things that I think we need to do is to raise in our own thinking as citizens, the status of the police. In some ways, in the police profession, we have with our nomenclature, even to some extent inhibited this recognition of the police particularly the ordinary officer on the street and the one with who the public becomes most in contact.

The men and women who are in the patrol cars walking the beats or actually dealing with the citizens in all kinds of situations need our support but also they need to be able to provide be provided with the training and the support that they need in order to further their careers and to help them do a good job for us citizens.

One of the ways for example our nomenclature can be self-defeating is in how we regard police. You know, with titles like Sergeant and Corporal and in some cases we almost implicitly connote the idea then the police are more like privates in the Army.

And certainly they are not. They are instead professionals with special training, specialized training, specialized authority, and specialized responsibility, and therefore we should be treating our police officers on the street the same way that the military treats their aviators.

In the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the people that fly planes do not lead large groups of people which is normally what goes along with increased rank and responsibility. But because of the important work they do in terms of the authority that they have and the need for individual judgment and good judgment, they have ranks of lieutenant, they start at lieutenants or ensigns or warrant officers.

Somehow we must increase the status of the individual police officer even at the lower ranks to that of a true professional. A professional of course is someone who is part of a body of disciplined people with specialized knowledge and skills determined to work for the service of others, these are the ideas of what a professional is.

And therefore as you are looking at all kinds of these aspects of the police force today, everything that can be done to enhance the status, the resources, and the personal ability and the education and training of the police will be a valuable step in the future.

The Cin 1965 and 67 had that sense of the importance of upgrading the status and professionalism of the police officer. In so in the ensuing years we've come a long way in that regard, but there is still much to be done. Not only for the image the public has for the police

officers but actually of their own self-interest. And therefore, I think the professionalization of the police is one of the most important things that I hope will come out of your studies.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to let me speak with you today. I commend you for your fine work that you've already accomplished and I wish you well in your historic opportunity to support and improve those guardians of peace and civil society for which we will all then be indebted as people within the United States. Thank you.

Phil Keith: Thank you, General Meese. On behalf of all the commissioners, we are grateful for your remarks today, certainly your historic leadership for this country. On behalf of Attorney General Barr, we thank you for joining us today as we conclude these historic hearings through our telephone conferencing.

Your words of wisdom are certainly going to be an inspiration for all of us and now we will turn to the challenging task of wrapping up the last seven months of intense work into a report for the Attorney General, as well as for President Trump. Again, we are indeed grateful for your time and remarks today through this historic Commission. Are there questions for General Meese from our Commissioners? General Meese, thank you again. It's been an honor to have you with us today.

General Meese: Thanks. Good to be with you. Good-bye.

Phil Keith: Yes, sir, General. And to all of the panelists on behalf of Attorney General Barr and his leadership team of Rachel Bissex and Jeff Favitta and all the Commissioners, the contributions that have been provided today by all the panelists and General Meese are sincerely appreciated and will assist this Commission in their deliberations and work.

I wanted to advise you to check again for the President's Commission page for additional updates and documents and information on the main justice website. We'll update directly when

information is made available for posting. And we once again want to thank the FBI for the use of their teleconference network and all the support of the Commission hearings.

I'd also like to thank our Federal Program staff once again for their tireless efforts and to support this Commission. Along with, maybe, concluding the teleconference hearings, the work of completing a recommendation and final work will continue and executive sessions will be conducted.

On a personal note, it's been an honor and a privilege to serve as the Commission's chair and I want to thank General Barr for having confidence in me to serve in this capacity. I'd be remiss if I didn't thank each Commissioner for your service to this Commission nor the many sacrifices you've made and the time commitments made to complete the work of the Commission.

It's been an honor to work with each of you and learning from each of you. Your guidance, input, questions, attention to detail, and your impeccable integrity were all deeply appreciated. As General Barr had stated, "you'll be leaving a footprint in our history and a blueprint to improve law enforcement and the components of the criminal justice system for the future".

Are there any questions or comments from Commissioners? If there's no further business before us today, the President's Commission is adjourned. Thank you, Commissioners, for your continued dedication and commitment to the work of this Commission.

I hope you have a great week -- great weekend and we'll be in touch soon for our next steps as we move forward for the completion of the report. I know that Commissioners have received a number of reminders on the chapter reviews and we encourage you to complete that work as soon as possible and we respect the time of your local jurisdiction. With that, we'll conclude today's hearing. Thank you.

Female 1: Thank you.

Male 2: Thank you, sir.

Female 2: Thank you.

Male 3: Thanks, Steve.

Male 1: Bye.

Male 4: (Crosstalk) Thanks Phil.

Male 5: Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes today's conference. We appreciate your participation. You may now disconnect.