

IDEAS OF IMPACT

"Profiling" and Traffic Stops

PROBLEM

Police officers have been conducting traffic stop "profiling" that is based on race, culture and ethnicity instead of suspicion and circumstance.



It was billed as an "emergency meeting" between police chiefs and minority activists from communities around the country. And while the community leaders expressed anger over what they see as double standards in law enforcement, the gathering also threw light on little-noticed efforts to defuse racial tensions between cops and communities.

The meeting was "pulled together in eight days," according to a spokesman for the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), a national organization of self-described progressive police chiefs and criminal justice professionals that convened the conference in the wake of highly publicized incidents involving alleged police abuse of minorities.

PERF conference participants recommended that officers doing a traffic-stop honestly explain at the beginning of each encounter or "engagement" why they are stopping someone. They should not create bogus reasons for a stop.

If the officer finds no reason to detain an individual, the officer

should apologize, conference participants agreed. If the officer says, "I'm sorry," this "would be a huge step in the right direction," Esteve says, adding "What a simple idea!"

In addition to police chiefs promising to create a national policy on traffic stops, says PERF president Frazier, meeting participants agreed that PERF should create a national working group of chiefs and leaders of civil rights organizations to "develop detailed proposals for new national initiatives" that address police and community relationships.

At issue, Hurtt, a Phoenix police chief explains that it is something broader than specific concerns such as use of force or traffic stops.

"We are looking at the issue of community building. How do we improve the quality of life? How do we make people feel safe in their neighborhoods?"

One solution, Hurtt says, is to hire police officers "who are not looking for adventure, but looking to serve, officers who will be accountable to the people."

- Carolyn Cosmos

Exhibit Aims To Raise Police Sensitivity to Race and Hate Crimes

A no-holds-barred exhibit of artifacts, memoirs and other evidence associated with racial intolerance and hate is being presented to law enforcement officers and other crime professionals by the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum for Tolerance.

By presenting computer models, actual objects and staged scenes from Holocaust death camps and other real-life examples of hate, the program gives law enforcement professionals a perturbing and practical look at racism and prejudice.

Law enforcement officers and other professionals - in groups of 20 to 100 participants - from all over the coun-

try are welcome to take part in the Tools for Tolerance program. Individual participation by professionals is by special arrangement.

The museum has just published a book that describes and explains hate groups across America, their rites, rituals, allegiances and agendas. The book, "The New Lexicon of Hate: The Changing Tactics and Symbols of America's Extremists," can be obtained free by calling Liebe Geft at the Simon Wiesenthal Museum, 310/553-9036. A CD that highlights how hate groups are using the Internet to spread their message is also available for free by calling the same number.

Training Police to Respond to Hate Crimes

A new training curriculum in Houston is designed to help those who train law enforcement officers improve departmental handling of hate crimes.

Workshops cover how to identify if there is bias in a crime, how to work with a community if a hate crime occurs, how to recognize and preserve evidence, the nature and history of hate crimes, and legal issues under federal and state statutes.

Curriculum organizers hope the Houston pilot program will help in developing a model curriculum for other states in training their officers to properly and effectively deal with hate crimes. The training is the first to be offered in response to a national initiative issued by the U.S. Attorney General's Office that directed federal prosecutors in all states to institute hate crime programs.

Houston also offers a hate crime hotline - 713/308-8737 under Mayor Lee Brown's initiative to combat hate crimes, which was developed independently from the Attorney General's pilot program.

Housing Incentive Encourages Police to Live Where They Work

In an effort to stop crime before it happens, as well as provide more home ownership opportunities to police officers, the Department of Housing and Urban Development is helping officers buy homes in the communities they serve.

The Officer Next Door program sells homes at half the appraised market value to police officers who agree to live in HUD-designated revitalization areas, usu-

ally urban neighborhoods where there are many vacant properties, including ones needing extensive repairs.

Officers taking out a mortgage insured by the Federal Housing Administration also need make only a \$100 down payment. The program requires officers to live in the home for at least three years.

For more information, contact Housing Counseling Clearinghouse at 800-217-6970.

Senior Police Officers Become Eager Students at Leadership Class

Civil War battles and ancient philosophers may seem like odd subjects for police training, but some groups of veteran officers are perusing the works of Aristotle and even taking trips to the scene of the Gettysburg battle in Pennsylvania.

The investigations are part of an unusual academic initiative, the Police Executive Leadership Program at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

Considered the only study program of its kind, the PELP accepts 24 officers each year who must be recommended by their commanding officers. They learn theory and discuss the practice of leader-

ship, managing differences, cooperation and collaboration with officials of other jurisdictions, and ethics and integrity.

In this untypical study program, criminal justice courses are purposely excluded from the curriculum to allow students to focus on the broader issues. They talk about managing differences, not only about racial diversity.

The network of professionals that's formed within each class means ideas get discussed across geographic and departmental boundaries.

Editor's Note: Special thank for the compilation of ideas from the contributing writers of ANS.






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