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**Governor's Task Force on Independent Investigations of  
Police Use of Force**

**Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, August 6, 2020  
1:00-4:00pm  
Zoom Meeting

Facilitator: LueRachelle Brim-Atkins

**Task Force Members Present:** Emma Catague, Jordan Chaney, Livio De La Cruz, Monisha Harrell, Jay Hollingsworth, Sanetta Hunter, Katrina Johnson, Chris Jordan, Pastor Walter Kendricks, Teri Rogers Kemp, Ben Krauss, Darrell Lowe, Nina Martinez, Brian Moreno, Eric Richey, Pua Savusa, James Schrimpsheer, Andre' Taylor, Spike Unruh, Waldo Waldron-Ramsey

**Task Force Members Absent:** Teresa Taylor, Tim Reynon, Kim Mosolf, Tyus Reed

**Advisory Group Members Present:** Monica Alexander, Craig Bill, Jim Bloss, Frank Cuthbertson, Rob Huss, John Hutchings, Deborah Jacobs, Maria Sigüenza, Sharon Swanson, Yasmin Trudeau

**Advisory Group Members Absent:** Ed Prince, Toshiko Hasegawa

**Task Force Staff Present:** LueRachelle Brim-Atkins, Sonja Hallum, Leah Landon, Dontae Payne

**Guests:** Leslie Cushman (on behalf of Tim Reynon), Sharita Jacobs-Thompson (presenter), Bernard Demczuk (presenter)

**Welcome**

**LueRachelle Brim-Atkins** welcomed everyone to the meeting and opened with a quote from the late Rep. John Lewis. She added that there is no longer a chat box as now everyone can be seen with the Zoom format. She reminded everyone that the meeting was being televised via TVW and a recording would be available after the meeting. LueRachelle reminded participants to mute themselves until they were ready to speak. **LueRachelle** introduced **Leslie Cushman** who served on behalf of Tim Reynon.

**LueRachelle** added that there were concerns about the homework and reiterated that the homework was assigned in hopes that it would give context for everyone and how we can reduce the impacts of racism in investigations of police use of force. **LueRachelle** encouraged members

to take care of themselves and recognize that not everyone has the same understanding of knowledge.

## **Review of Ground Rules**

**LueRachelle** reviewed the ground rules the group had discussed at the previous meeting. Any feedback from members had been incorporated into the version presented during the meeting. The ground rules are available on the Governor's website.

## **Meeting Overview**

**LueRachelle** invited **Sonja Hallum** to provide an overview of the meeting. Sonja reminded members that the purpose of the task force is to hear from those most impacted by police use of force and to look at the process around investigations of police use of force. The task force is to provide input and recommendations on how to improve the current process. This work will lead to the legislation requested by the Governor in the next legislative session, and this work will go hand in hand with the work the legislature is working on as well.

**Sonja** added that what we are looking at when improving the investigative process is, we are not just creating the structure of the system, but we are looking at the quality of the investigations that are occurring. **Sonja** added that the thought behind the present meeting, was if we can understand how racism is deeply rooted in our institutions and systems, we can better understand how this is manifested in the investigative system. Knowing this will allow us to directly impact what we know is there.

**Sonja** reviewed the meeting objectives:

- 1) Acknowledge the history of racism in policing in the United States.
- 2) Explore the impact of this history on investigations of police use of force.
- 3) Discuss ways we can reduce the impacts of racism on investigations of police use of excessive force.

**Sonja** added that at the next meeting the group will begin looking at investigative systems in other jurisdictions. The group will be assisted by faculty and fellows from the Munk School for Global Affairs at the University of Toronto. **Sonja** added that the group would be looking at the processes by component and be able to make recommendations based on those meetings.

- **Jay Hollingsworth** added that the Native population has been oppressed by the European mindset a bit longer, and as a reminder to others, the Native people are a definite part of the policing issue and it was easy for police to group Natives in with everyone else of brown skin, and to work to arrest and make modern day slaves out of them.
  - **Nina Martinez** said this work personally triggers her as well, and this is a good reminder that her own dad could not enter the front door of a white person's house.
  - **LueRachelle** said she had grown up in the time when she could not enter a white person's front door either, and this is a good reminder.

## Get Agreement on Guiding Principles

**LueRachelle** asked if there were any other comments or additional feedback on the guiding principles before the group adopts them.

- **Waldo Waldron-Ramsey** asked if in the recommendations the group would recommend what the victims or their family should be entitled to in terms of process.
  - **Sonja Hallum** said these are the guidelines that are guiding the work of the task force, and the group should use these when making recommendations. Sonja said this is separate from the current question, and there will be a conversation about this.
  - **Teri Rogers Kemp** said Jay's comment speaks to two things. One, not wanting to confront the idea that all these different nations that are black and brown are being affected. Teri added that you always see a high percentage of homicide victims described as "other", and they deserve to be recognized for who they are. **Teri** added in response to Waldo's question that it is important to look at the process rights given to victims and their family members.
- There were no other questions or comments on the guiding principles. The final document can be found on the Governor's website.

## Presentation on the History of Race and Policing

- Dr. Bernard Demzcuk, Professor, University of District Columbia
- Dr. Sharita Jacobs-Thompson, Professor, Montgomery College
- The presenters provided an overview on the history of race and policing. The presentation can be watched on the meeting recording and begins at 24 minutes in.
  - Materials from the presentation can be found on the Governor's website.
  - The presentation was about 45 minutes and length and followed by a Q&A for task force and advisory group members.
- Q&A
  - **LueRachelle** mentioned that other people of color could be added to the Critical Race Theory timeline.
    - **Dr. Demzcuk** said this one is specific to African Americans, but they are looking to have it done for other communities of color as well.
  - **Walter Kendricks:** Walter asked where the Critical Race Theory Timeline originated from.
    - **Dr. Demzcuk** said he used to draw this on a blackboard and then moved to sketching it. He then sent it to a group who designed the template and he has filled it in.
  - **Andre' Taylor** said the presentation was awesome and it is necessary. Andre' said his issue is how is it transferable to a people in a dominant society that feels "to the victor comes the spoils". There is a spirit and a thought process in white men that feels empowered by what they have conquered and if they maintain a sense of power they couldn't care less. Andre' said he wants the white community to feel just as close to this as others, so they have a self-interest in attacking the issue.

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- **Dr. Jacobs-Thompson** said when George Floyd was killed, her and Bernie heard from a lot of officers in D.C. who have been discussing these issues and they want to be on the frontline of helping to solve the issues. They asked for more information and how they can build on what was discussed in their training. What happened to George Floyd sparked something in these officers, and they want to be a part of the solution. She said this gave her a lot of hope.
- **Dr. Demczuk** said he is not going to talk to black people about racism and white supremacy, he is going to talk to white people. He added that 95% of the people at the CJTC training were white and there was some pushback. It is important that we go where we are going now, because George Floyd has changed everything. He added that we have never seen the diversity in protests like we have in the last four months, something is happening out there, and it is the perfect opportunity to start working with people.
- **Teri Rogers Kemp** thanked the presenters and asked about the role of policing and where we are at with juveniles. So many people come into the system and under the hand of police when they are young in part, because of their situation. Teri added this has happened to black ancestors since they were brought to this country.
  - **Dr. Jacobs-Thompson** mentioned that something that always comes up is how many people have had the dinner table conversation about how to respond and react to the police. Even police officers say they still must have these conversations with their police. She added that there was a point in Washington D.C. where juveniles were going to a certain place in an adult prison, and there is a documentary that discusses how they were impacted by that. It is problematic when from a very young age your encounters with police are negative.
  - **Dr. Demczuk** added that we have destroyed multiple generations with the crack cocaine crisis. The problem is structural, historical and institutional racism. He added there is a WSU study on redlining that the group should consider. Redlining is one of the most atrocious policies.

## **Breakout Room Discussions**

The breakout room function was not working, and this portion of the agenda was altered to be a large group discussion.

## Discussion

Task Force and Advisory Group members were called on and asked to respond to the first question presented in the homework:

1. From the homework and today's presentation, what did you learn about the history of policing that you did not know before?
  - **Jordan Chaney:** The history behind "paddy wagon".
  - **Jim Bloss:** How pervasive and complex the institutional racism is in general, and the impact it has on all the pieces of the justice system.
  - **Brian Moreno:** The ability of people to get creative with codes and policies to design and get to specific outcomes.
  - **Rob Huss:** Brian's point was right on, and the presenters did a great job explaining this to people from so many different levels. The other homework assignments also put you in a valuable position to have to reflect.
  - **Yasmin Trudeau:** The history of Irish people and their role in the process, and how this is woven into the oppression of Black people.
  - **Frank Cuthbertson:** It was helpful, AND Frank wondered if this presentation would be helpful for the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (WAPA) as they need to understand this history as well. Frank also recommended the book "The Condemnation of Blackness".
  - **Puao Savusa:** Familiar with a lot of what was presented on, but like what Brian said we don't see how slavery has evolved into the type of institutional racism we see today.
  - **James Schrimsher:** Did not know about the connection with the Irish population in the South and how the two cultures were connected.
  - **Andre' Taylor:** Did not know some of the specifics from the 1800s.
  - **Livio De La Cruz:** The YouTube videos from the homework and the stats about why people join law enforcement were interesting. It stood out that the second most reported reason for joining law enforcement was people wanting an exciting job.
  - **Sharon Swanson:** Learned the origin of the word "patrol. Sharon added that the coordination of efforts behind prison industrial complexes was disturbing.
  - **Eric Richey:** Trainings like these are impactful with a solid percentage of people. Eric also mentioned that he had all his prosecutors watch 13<sup>th</sup> (sent via email as Eric's audio was not working).
  - **Waldo Waldron-Ramsey:** Enjoyed the presentation and homework, and learned that they are doing this type of training in D.C. The question Waldo had was if D.C. officers received refreshers on the training, as this is something that could be useful at the CJTC and the refresher would be helpful.
  - **Leslie Cushman:** Struck by the intentionality of all the legal structures in place to support white supremacy. Leslie added she is puzzled by how those will be addressed in the independent investigation statute.
  - **Monica Alexander:** Struck by the vagrancy laws, and it is sad and disappointing that people who have been enslaved for so many years and finally have their freedom are taken in for something that they don't feel was wrong.
  - **Jordan Chaney:** Some of the information is not new but watching the responses, there is a lot of hope in getting the information out there. Jordan feels it will be

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beneficial to police departments and communities and will help aid in people understanding.

- **Jay Hollingsworth:** The details of the presentation were great, Jay added that he knew a lot of the information. Jay mentioned he learned that White people are killed more often than Black people, and this was pointed out by Dr. Marks in his videos. It is the White people attacking officers, not the Black people.
- **Katrina Johnson:** A great presentation, though a lot of it was known. Katrina's said it is great that this is being given to law enforcement officers but is curious as to if it is changing the way they think and act.
  - i. **LueRachelle** said this question would be forwarded to the presenters to see what kind of follow up they do with departments.
- **Teri Rogers Kemp:** Teri said she has lived this and has learned all the details one way or another. Watching the movie 13<sup>th</sup> and the other three videos, she is not surprised. Teri added she learned that White people still don't know. People who do not have to experience or live it, still do not get it. Teri also agreed with what Katrina said and added that we could teach this all day long, but it is necessary to work on regulating behavior.
- **Darrell Lowe:** A phenomenal presentation, and they approach the information well. The connection between domestic terrorism and Jim Crow, the connection to the Irish and slavery, and then the vagrancy law surrounding walking on train tracks were all enlightening.
- **Maria Sigüenza:** Always a good reminder to ground us in the work. Maria added that she learned the origin of the word "patrol" and then the data around America having 5% of the world's population but 25% of the prison population.
- **Emma Catague:** Learned a lot from the presentation, and really appreciates the information. Emma added she is still digesting and trying to compare this to other impacted communities. It is traumatizing to go through all this and think about the role we must play to do what we need to do.
- **Sanetta Hunter:** Enjoyed the presentation and learned a lot. It was traumatizing having to be reminded of these things. It was interesting that the police were intentionally making arrests for the intention of leasing prisoners for labor.
- **John Hutchings:** John added that the Critical Race Theory Timeline is fascinating and as a veteran law enforcement officer they were taught to police the community the way it is, not the way you want it to be. John added that he had taught the history of policing and law enforcement for years in high schools and colleges, and race was never discussed. There was never a racial or ethnic component to this. It was never in the textbooks or assigned by the University to teach.
- **Walter Kendricks:** Excellent presentation and presenters, Walter told Teri to be encouraged and said that we will get there. Walter said it is fascinating that John said it all. He has been teaching law enforcement for many years and there has not been a racial component, when policing came to be because of a racial component. The battle is against the system. The main thing Walter learned and stuck out is the absolute arrogance of White America, and that you can put laws in place to subjugate a person because they are walking alongside a railroad track. Until we

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turn and confront who we are as a people, and what we are, we are not going to get anywhere.

- **Ben Krauss:** First thing that jumped out is that police reflect society. Ben added that he developed and taught a class in Spokane and they used 13<sup>th</sup> and the New Jim Crow, and the big gap that was filled was Civil War reconstruction and Jim Crow. Ben thanked staff for the videos from Dr. Marks and added that it is important to use data to dispel myths and understand where we are.
- **Spike Unruh:** Did not know the extent of which the laws discriminated against people of color, and that law enforcement was forced to enforce these. It would be valuable for the State Patrol Academy like what was given today.
- **Monisha Harrell:** The strategy of dressing well during protests was interesting, and to learn that this was a strategy, Monisha said she may need to adopt this. Monisha added that we are looking at what she considers milestones, and she did not see the riots started by Marsha P. Johnson on the timeline. Is this because she was trans? James Baldwin was also left out. Monisha did see on the document though when Michael Jackson released Thriller. Monisha finished by saying that some people are proud of law enforcement's racist history and when we talk about weeding out the bad apples, we must weed out the people who are proud of that history and seek to reinforce it.
  - i. **LueRachelle** added that for many years she did not own casual clothes for this very reason.

2. What are some of the ways we can reduce the impacts of racism on investigations of police use of excessive force?

- **Teri Rogers Kemp:** Police officers should have to come from and live in and interact with the communities they serve. If we have more officers from within the jurisdiction, we will have fewer victims.
- **Brian Moreno:** Brian asked if a Survey could be sent out with this question so we can capture everyone's feedback and the group can discuss what they need to have in their mind to be sure they can capture everything.
  - i. **LueRachelle** asked Leah if she could send out a survey, and Leah said yes.
  - ii. **Brian** asked what someone like him must have in mind to be the right steward and help answer these questions.
- **Jordan Chaney:** The daughter and mom involved with a local case have not heard with local law enforcement since the death of their family member. There needs to be expedited communication and they should dispatch a mental health or grief counselor to the family.
- **Waldo Waldron-Ramsey:** Make the agency independent and have law enforcement complete a diversity/equity/inclusion training with refreshers. They should also be held accountable to make sure they are still using a racial equity lens. Waldo said specific anti-racist training is what he means by a racial-equity lens, a training that helps them understand the dynamics and structure of racism.
- **Jay Hollingsworth:** The person you are encountering as a police officer is someone's mother or son, and their parents do not want to bury them. Equality has

been neglected and avoided since day one. We need to start at a basic level and realize the person we are encountering is a living human being.

- **Livio De La Cruz:** It would be helpful to have rules for each of the way and investigation can go wrong, for example, the tendency to treat the victim as a thug who deserved to be shot. Additionally, law enforcement leaking information to portray a certain image of the victim. As we make rules to address these, there is a tendency to make broad and general rules that do not mention race, but there is value in bringing that up.
- **Leslie Cushman:** Like Livio said, we must consider the police narrative and character assassination and the tendency of police to say they feared for their life, and the dehumanizing of black life. There are a lot of anecdotes around aid not being provided because the life was lesser, and we need police not involved in the investigations of police. We also need to change the accountability of police use of force.
- **Monica Alexander:** We need to be careful of being dismissive. In response to Brian, listen and not just nod. Monica added that Bernie and Sharita spent the week at the CJTC last week and they taught to 120 recruits.
- **Yasmin Trudeau:** Learn it, the information is out there, and communities are telling you about their experiences. Naming it and owning it. Do not be afraid to say this is where we are at and hold yourself and your institution accountable.
- **John Hutchings:** Managing expectations and perceptions and educating law enforcement on the impacts of racism and police use of force.
- **Darrell Lowe:** Educating the public, but also a standardization and systematic process for all. There is currently some ambiguity in I-940. A clear definition of terms, this speaks to some of the vagueness, and then of course providing funding for agencies necessary to meet all the mandates of the laws.
- **Chris Jordan:** The way we reduce the impacts of racism is by creating laws and systems that hold officers accountable for violence, and the whole investigative process should be held accountable.

### **Additional Comments**

- **Chris Jordan:** Chris expressed frustration with the handling of the Manny Ellis case in Pierce County.
- **Katrina Johnson:** Katrina expressed that she doesn't feel like the group is accomplishing much and we continue to trigger, traumatize, and further harm the people that are trying to come to the table to help make change. Katrina added it is not her duty as an impacted person to help others understand their privilege and why they have it, or what they need to do to fix it or learn from it. That is your own duty and job.

### **Closing Comments and Adjournment**

LueRachelle said there are some very specific recommendations coming out of today's work, and she expressed her appreciation for their comments and time.