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MEET THE CHALLENGE OF  
CRIME AND JUSTICE

## National Institute of Justice

**Sarah V. Hart**  
Director

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## Director's Message

This issue of the *NIJ Journal* discusses a wide range of issues—public trust and confidence in criminal justice, how to identify potential school shooters, protecting children exposed to domestic violence, and solving the problem of tired police on the job.

The first article, "Trust and Confidence in Criminal Justice" by Lawrence W. Sherman, investigates why public trust and confidence rates are falling just as law enforcement becomes more effective. It discusses the racial divide, current demands for change, and potential solutions.

The second article summarizes the interim report of the United States Secret Service Safe School Initiative, which focused on a rare, but significant component of school violence—incidents of targeted violence on school grounds. Because of the Secret Service's knowledge and expertise in researching, understanding, and preventing targeted violence, NIJ funded the Secret Service to study school shootings. Their report will help schools understand the behavior and thinking of young persons who commit targeted violence at school.

In the third article, Debra Whitcomb discusses how prosecutors have been drawn into the debate over how best to protect children in the context of domestic violence. As research reveals more about the effects of domestic violence on children, there are raised expectations as to what prosecutors can do for children who are exposed to domestic violence. Whitcomb explores the challenges facing prosecutors when children are exposed to domestic violence, how new State laws are affecting practice, and what prosecutors can do to help battered women and their children.

In the fourth article, Bryan Vila and Dennis Jay Kenney explain that fatigue is a widespread problem that can seriously degrade police officers' health, safety, interpersonal skills, and decisionmaking. The National Commission on Sleep Disorders Research heard testimony in 1991 from officers about terrible work schedules, high stress, and overwhelming fatigue. But the Commission had no way to determine whether the witnesses' experiences were representative of police officers in general because of a lack of scientific data documenting the prevalence of police fatigue. Now, data are available from the first comprehensive research on police work hours. The article also provides instructive suggestions as to how police departments can address this serious, challenging problem.

During my tenure as director, NIJ will continue to research the challenges faced by the criminal justice community and suggest strategies to address these challenges.

Sarah V. Hart  
Director