

REMARKS
AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

OF

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AT THE

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE SESSION
AT THE
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE
ANNUAL CONFERENCE
“WHAT WORKS AND WHAT MATTERS IN POLICING”

ON

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2015
CHICAGO, IL

Thank you so much, Vince [Talucci]. I appreciate those kind words. Let me return those sentiments. Vince, John [Firman], Hassan [Aden], and the entire IACP leadership and staff have been outstanding partners, not only because they so graciously hosted today's session, but because of the work they do every day to support research and advance evidence-based practices.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Office of Justice Programs share a vital mission – to help our nation's law enforcement leaders and officers do their jobs as effectively and as safely as possible – and Vince and his team have been critical to helping us get the latest knowledge and best practices out to the field. The law enforcement community is smarter, stronger, and more effective thanks to the work that they do.

I also want to thank Nancy [Rodriguez] and her team – particularly Maureen McGough – for the tremendous work that they've done to bring this session together. You can see from the agenda that we've got an amazing line-up of presentations covering a range of high-profile topics of interest to law enforcement. This was possible thanks to Nancy, Maureen, and many other hard-working staff at both NIJ and IACP. Thank you all.

And let me thank all of you – police professionals, scholars, and everyone who cares about criminal justice science – for your commitment to expanding our base of knowledge. I know most of you are law enforcement professionals interested in knowing what the latest science tells us. You are to be commended for advancing evidence-based policing across the country. And to those among you who are researchers and scientists, I want to thank you for your dedication to improving our criminal and juvenile justice systems. Your work, which has always been so important, – has been instrumental in changing the face of policing in recent years.

I'm very proud of the role that NIJ has played in expanding our knowledge. Much of the seminal research in policing and criminal justice has come out of their work, from experiments in hot spots policing to studies of mandatory arrests in domestic violence cases. NIJ's contributions have been invaluable, and Nancy and her staff are redoubling their efforts to build on what we know and to make sure that information is useful to practitioners.

As Nancy will be the first to tell you, we don't do this work in a vacuum. We set our priorities – both research and programmatic – based on the needs of the field, and we measure our impact by the extent to which we can advance policies and practices on the ground. To put it simply, if it doesn't serve the practical interests of our law enforcement and criminal justice partners, we don't consider it a wise investment.

We know the information needs of the law enforcement profession are expanding – and that's a good thing. It's a sign that we're no longer satisfied with business as usual, and it's a reflection of the growing sophistication of law enforcement methods and philosophies.

It's also an indication that public safety is a complex and complicated enterprise.

For instance, we know now – thanks in great part to NIJ-sponsored research – that the way police do their jobs matters as much as the results they achieve. It matters because methods and attitudes can help earn compliance with the law and public confidence in the system. This research has helped to spur a change in mentality about what works to keep our communities safe.

When the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing said that police are more effective – and more just – when they act as guardians of the peace, not warriors on a battlefield, it was speaking with a large and growing body of research behind it. It's encouraging to see how law enforcement leaders across the country have heeded this research and are cultivating stronger relationships with the citizens they serve.

I think of the work police are doing in places like Birmingham and Pittsburgh, two of the sites in our National Initiative on Building Community Trust and Justice. They're actively reaching out to citizens, involving them in their decision-making, and allowing them to see first-hand the hard work police do and the challenges officers face every day. Those outreach efforts have made a big difference. Those communities now feel a sense of solidarity with law enforcement and are invested in the work that they do.

This is a topic you'll hear discussed during one of the sessions today on improving community relations. And that's only one example of how science can benefit and validate the work of law enforcement.

NIJ is moving on all fronts to supply our law enforcement partners with the information they need and deserve:

They're working to improve knowledge about how to combat violent extremism here in the United States. A half-a-dozen research projects on this topic are winding down this year and will be featured in one of today's workshops.

They've undertaken a major effort called the Sentinel Events Initiative, which is using lessons from the medical and transportation industries to help us understand how we in the criminal justice system can more effectively address errors like wrongful arrests or convictions in a non-blaming, forward-thinking way.

And they manage a robust technology portfolio aimed at enhancing officer safety and wellness, reducing use of force, and strengthening broadband communications. A session today will look at cutting-edge programs on unmanned aerial systems and video surveillance.

Meanwhile, we're finding ways to enhance collaboration between the researcher and practitioner communities. Last year, NIJ established a scholarship for research-minded, mid-level law enforcement officers to bring them to the IACP conference. This

program, called LEADS – which stands for Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science – is intended to benefit the officers, but OJP gets something out of it as well. We hear from these officers about the work they do and the challenges they face, which helps us tailor and refine our research agenda. Could I ask the LEADS scholars to stand? Thank you all for your commitment to science and for serving as a bridge between research and practice.

Our work to infuse science in practice extends even beyond NIJ. The Smart Policing Initiative managed by our Bureau of Justice Assistance is pairing research institutions and law enforcement agencies in 45 different sites, and those partnerships are making an impact. A number of the sites have seen significant reductions in crime. And our Violence Reduction Network brings together not only OJP and the Justice Department’s other grant-making offices – the COPS Office and the Office on Violence Against Women – but also its enforcement units, the FBI, DEA, ATF, and Marshals. These agencies are all working together with local police to design crime-fighting strategies centered on data and research. Those collaborations have also yielded significant public safety gains.

In my view, the key to law enforcement effectiveness in the 21st century is this ability to forge sustainable and meaningful partnerships with researchers and to adapt evidence to practice. This, too, will be a topic covered in one of today’s sessions.

I’m pleased that NIJ – with IACP’s support – has put together an outstanding program, and I’m looking forward to the wealth of knowledge that will be shared today. But I also want to hear from you. Our efforts to bring you the latest and most relevant information depend on your insights and feedback, so I encourage you to let Nancy and me know what it is we could be doing that we’re not already doing to meet your needs in the field.

I hope you leave here today with much more than you brought with you. I hope what you hear will generate new ideas and motivate you to orient your work around science. And I hope we will all come away with an even stronger resolve to make evidence central to our work.

Thank you.

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