

REPORT ON POLICE REFORM BY SOUTH NYACK/GRAND VIEW-ON-HUDSON EXECUTIVE ORDER 203 PANEL ON POLICE REFORM

Created by the six-member, BIPOC-majority steering committee and submitted to local officials and law enforcement for their review and response and, subsequently, to the general public.

Introduction

People of color, first and foremost Black people, are the targets--too often, literally--of police harassment, abuse, brutality, and murder.

“While there are no definitive figures on how many Americans are shot by police every year, existing data point to grave differences by race,” notes a 2015 report by PolicyLink (“a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity”). “In 2014 alone, police were responsible for the deaths of 302 Black people across the country. From 2010– 2012, Black men were 21 times more likely than their white peers to be killed by police. Similar

racial disparities hold true among those injured by police.”

(https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/PL_BCC_DEMIL_POLICE_DEPT_04292015_rev_0.pdf)

This is a secret hidden in plain sight. No BIPOC (Black/Indigenous/People of Color) American needs “definitive figures” to alert him, her, or them to the horrific cost of racial bias in policing and in *police culture*.¹ The murders, by police--euphemized by law enforcement and a complicit news media as “officer-involved shootings,” sanitizing language we reject as part of the problem--of Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Ousmane Zango, Sean Bell, Ramarley Graham, Patrick Dorismond, Akai Gurley, Eric Garner, Oscar Grant, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Antwon Rose Jr., Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and here in Rockland County, Tina Davis and Herve Gilles, are only the

¹ “Police culture” is a term we’ll use throughout this report in reference to the unofficial, largely below-the-radar culture of law-enforcement personnel, regarded by themselves as an insular social world, a subculture with its own traditions and taboos, most notoriously, the “blue wall of silence” that forbids whistleblowing and conceals wrongdoing in the name of what is, bluntly put, a criminal conspiracy to break the law with impunity.

latest in a more than four-hundred-year-old litany of abuse, brutality, and murder, in this country, of people of color.

Sanctioned by white supremacy, embedded in American institutions such as policing (among countless other institutions), and woven into the fabric of everyday life, anti-BIPOC violence is a fact of life in a nation built on the backs of Indigenous people, enslaved Black people, Chinese laborers, and other subjugated peoples of color. Policing and police culture aren't *uniquely* racist; they reflect the deeply ingrained white-supremacist attitudes and agenda of American society at large. But law enforcement, by virtue of its unique power to use physical and even deadly force, has become, for many BIPOC Americans and their allies, the face of racism.

President Trump's exhortations, at meetings with police and in his rallies, for police to administer vigilante justice, inciting those charged with the responsibility of enforcing our laws to break them (<https://harpers.org/archive/2018/07/a-flag-for-trumps-america/>), together with the well-documented infiltration of law enforcement by far-right and white-supremacist elements (<https://tcf.org/content/commentary/dismantling-white-supremacist-infiltration-of-the-military-and-law-enforcement/?agreed=1>) and the militarization of policing in the name of "dominating"

communities of color and racial-justice protestors, has only cemented that perception.

But BIPOC people across the nation, together with their allies, are rising up.

The Black Lives Matter movement and the protests that flooded America's streets in the wake of the grotesque, emotionally shattering video of the murder of George Floyd--a murder committed by an officer with 18 complaints against him (<https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/28/us/minneapolis-officer-complaints-george-floyd/index.html>)--have awakened a rage for racial justice, and for real and lasting police reform.

Governor Andrew Cuomo's executive order 203, "New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative," issued on June 12, 2020, is a response to that rage. (Read the governor's order here:

[https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-203-new-york-state-police-reform-and-reinvention-collaborative.](https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-203-new-york-state-police-reform-and-reinvention-collaborative))

History teaches us that politicians and the establishment media never lead; they only ever follow, as the Vietnam-era antiwar protests made abundantly clear. Black Lives Matter and the murder of

George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others like them is our Vietnam. We will not rest until they, and every other victim of police violence, are granted the justice they deserve, and until racial bias in policing is eliminated and racism in police culture rooted out. This report is an early, small step in that direction.

The police themselves are a crucial part of policereform.

Without officers of good conscience, rightly appalled by the actions of colleagues like the rogue cop who ground his knee into the neck of a handcuffed, face-down, prostrate and powerless George Floyd as he begged for his life, police reform will never happen. Reports like this one will only be window dressing, a gift to reactionary elements in political and police culture well-served by the white-supremacist status quo.

And there are officers of good conscience, officers like the ones who spoke to our steering committee in confidence, who regard the job they do as a high calling and who deplore officers who discredit the badges they wear with pride. Policing is difficult, dangerous, psychologically stressful work that takes a terrible psychological toll, sometimes leading to suicide. Officers are too often tasked by society with responsibilities for which they are neither trained nor for which their mission is suited, such as the compassionate treatment of those

in mental-health or substance-abuse crisis. Officers committed to respectful, compassionate engagement with the communities they're sworn to serve and protect know that violent, abusive, corrupt, criminal, and racist elements in their ranks make their jobs not only more difficult but more dangerous by far, since those elements polarize communities, especially communities of color, against them.

BIPOC officers like the ones who shared their insights and experiences with us have it worst of all. Isolated in overwhelmingly white departments and viewed with suspicion if not contempt by members of their own community, they're subject to racist harassment from fellow officers and, more often than not, passed over for promotion. Their voices must be centered in discussions about police reform within police departments and within police culture.

“You can have the best training in the world but at the end of the day it comes down to morals, it comes down to the culture of an organization, it comes down to what's tolerated.” (*Hechinger Report*, June 28, 2020, <https://hechingerreport.org/police-education-is-broken-can-it-be-fixed/>)

Racialized policing will continue to assault the humanity, infringe on the rights, and imperil the lives of people of color until officers of good conscience, committed to a more just, more equitable policing

that truly does serve and protect the communities they police, accept and act on the founding assumption of Executive Order 203: that anti-Black (and, by extension, brown, Asian, indigenous, etc.) bias is as pervasive in law enforcement as it is in American institutions and everyday life. Officers who want to “do the right thing” (so to speak) must be willing to have difficult conversations with the communities they serve about racial bias in law enforcement, racism in police culture, and to commit fully and unflinchingly to serious strategies for tearing both up, root and branch.

Here follow our demands and suggestions for real and lasting police reform. (*Note: Throughout our report, we refer readers, wherever our demands overlap with those of the Rockland People’s Panel on Policing, to their exhaustive, data-driven report, archived here:*

<https://www.rocklandppp.org/report.html>.)

**MAKE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT A
PERMANENT PART OF EVERY
MUNICIPALITY IN ROCKLAND
COUNTY AND THROUGHOUT NEW**

YORK STATE (See, also, RPPP report, “Enact Real Civilian Oversight of Policing in Rockland County”)

We demand transparency; we demand accountability; we demand racial justice and the radical reinvention of policing as we know it. Thus, we unequivocally second the RPPP report’s call for the extension of the April 1, 2021 deadline for E.O. 203 and the creation of “a civilian review council that has subpoena power to fully investigate ...the racially charged misconduct in Rockland County and throughout the state” and, we would add, to enact profound and permanent reform that addresses racial bias in policing and racism, along with related social pathologies such as toxic masculinity, the “warrior” mentality that sees cops as Punisher²-like vigilantes whose mission is the “dominance” of the spaces they “occupy.”

² Punisher is a Marvel comics character, a hyperviolent vigilante who has been embraced by far-right and white-supremacist elements in police culture. Wikipedia notes, “Since 2015, the skull emblem [has become] popular within police officers’ Blue Lives Matter movement, with many companies producing decals, stickers, and T-shirts featuring the Punisher emblem colored with the thin blue line, or atop an American flag. In 2017, the Catlettsburg Police department in Kentucky faced a public backlash after installing large decals with the Punisher’s skull and ‘Blue Lives Matter’ on the hoods of police cars, and removed the decals in response to public pressure.”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Punisher#Law_enforcement)

The truncated time frame, finite mission, and limited power of this police-reform panel, together with Executive Order 203's lack of quantifiable, verifiable markers of success and little in the way of specific commitment from the state to implement *any* of our recommendations is widely regarded by racial-justice and police-reform activists as woefully inadequate to the task of rigorous oversight and substantive reform, at best, and window-dressing at worst--a cynical ploy to appease racial-justice activists in the wake of George Floyd's murder and the subsequent Black Lives Matter protests that erupted throughout the state and across the nation.

The solution is obvious: a *well-funded, permanent* people's panel on policing in every municipality, appointed not by law enforcement but elected by popular vote; consisting solely of citizens who are neither elected officials or active-duty law enforcement; with full access to all officers' unredacted disciplinary records, regardless of rank; and equipped with subpoena power and assisted by the village, town, or city attorney in reviewing the hiring, promotion, and investigation of law-enforcement officers. Crucially, every effort should be made, through official outreach as well as informal "back-channel" contacts with prominent voices in communities of color, to ensure that BIPOC residents are well-represented. There should be numerical parity, at the very least, between BIPOC

panelists and white panelists, and social- and racial-justice activists (such as Black Lives Matter organizers) should be actively encouraged to run for seats on the panel.

Subpoena power, together with the authority to conduct *independent* investigations and to overrule police department's internal investigations, and to discipline and fire when warranted, is essential; the sorry history of civilian review boards throughout the nation, hobbled by police unions or rendered ineffectual through legislation or backroom politics, is well-documented.

An article in *The Hill*

(<https://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/crime/302521-how-mayors-police-unions-and-cops-rig-civilian-review-boards>) doesn't mince words: "In practice, ...civilian review boards have proven to be an ineffectual check against police misconduct. ... Some boards, for example, are confined to reviewing the findings of the police department's own internal affairs investigations. The trouble here is that the police can game the system by simply ignoring most citizen complaints. If the department only investigates a small fraction of complaints, the citizen review board will only review that tiny fraction. This happened in Portland, where it came to light that the police department dismissed [two-thirds of the complaints](#) it received without inquiry. ... Because of the selection process for members,

many boards lack true independence. The rules vary across jurisdictions, but the mayor or police chief commonly appoint a majority of the board. The rationale is that the police department has to be represented in deliberations that will affect its personnel and operations. However, those appointees are too often beholden to the very people who run the department.”

(See, also: [“Civilian Police Review Boards: Toothless Testaments to Institutional Racism,”](#) *Mint Press News*; “Dangerous Trends Toward Civilian Police Review Boards,” National Center for Constitutional Studies, <https://nccs.net/blogs/articles/dangerous-trends-toward-civilian-police-review-boards>); “Thousands of Complaints Do Little to Change Police Ways,” *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/30/us/derek-chauvin-george-floyd.html>).

Each panel should be integrated into a countywide association for purposes of information-sharing and strategizing, and should meet periodically in a “congress of people’s panels” to close ranks with grassroots groups working in this area, such as the Rockland People’s Panel on Policing and the Coalition to End the New Jim Crow. Panels will not only oversee policing in their municipalities but will, in addition, “gather information that will lead to more

transparency into the true practices and policies of the Rockland County police departments”

(<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/rockland/2021/01/12/rockland-police-citizen-panels-addressing-law-enforcement-reform/6551415002/>), and, at the county level, share ideas about which police-reform solutions members want to collectively advocate for, working across municipalities on long-term goals.

There’s no need to reinvent the wheel: NACOLE (the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement, <https://www.nacole.org/>) has for 25 years been working to build “public trust through law enforcement accountability and transparency”; its expertise, and that of organizations like it, could be marshalled to implement effective civilian oversight in Rockland county and throughout New York state.

Further Reading, Viewing:

“Can Police Reform Work? A Mayor and a Historian Discuss Policing in Newark, N.J.,” *Frontline*, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/can-police-reform-work-historian-jelani-cobb-mayor-ras-baraka-discuss-policing-in-newark-new-jersey/?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ICYMI&utm_content=19xxxx

“Policing the Police,” *Frontline*,

https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/policing-the-police/?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ICYMI&utm_content=19xxxx

HIRING PRACTICES, PERIODIC REVIEW:

WEEDING OUT THE BAD APPLES

INVESTIGATE APPLICANTS AS WELL AS ACTIVE-DUTY PERSONNEL’S SOCIAL-MEDIA ACCOUNTS FOR TIES TO WHITE-SUPREMACIST, WHITE-NATIONALIST, ETHNONATIONALIST, FAR-RIGHT, MILITIA, OR ANTIGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS, AS WELL AS ANY ORGANIZATIONS IDENTIFIED BY THE FBI AS AGENTS OF DOMESTIC TERRORISM OR HATE GROUPS (See, also, corresponding section in RPPP report, “Investigate and Remove Personnel with Ties to White-Supremacist Organizations”)

At a 2021 meeting of the Orangetown police-reform board, one of our members asked Orangetown Supervisor Teresa Kenny if she was aware of the threat posed by the penetration of law enforcement by far-right militias such as The Three Percenters and violent anti-government groups such as the Oath Keepers and Boogaloo Bois and, crucially, if she could say with confidence that Orangetown's department was free from such influences.

The Oath Keepers, who participated in the January 6, 2021 assault on the Capitol building, were founded months after Barack Obama took office and have ties to white-supremacist organizations; their "explicit agenda," according to the Southern Poverty Law Center, is "recruiting current and former military, law enforcement, and first responders to their ranks."

(<https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2021/02/12/well-jan-6-insurrection-oath-keepers-trafficked-violence-and-conspiracy-theories>).

Yet few police departments appear to be taking this threat seriously, according to an article in *Mother Jones* magazine

(<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2021/01/oath-keepers-militia-capitol-insurrection-military-police/>). Indeed, Supervisor Kenny replied that she had no idea what The Three Percenters was, and in any event was concerned exclusively with what is going on in her municipality, not the D.C. insurrection.

That, in fact, is precisely the point: how can local officials know if their departments are free from far-right and white-supremacist infiltration unless they undertake a vigorous review?

Law-enforcement authorities have for decades been sounding the alarm about this danger: as early as 2006, the FBI warned of the “[White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement](#)” in an intelligence assessment.” Now, such extremists pose a clear and present danger to domestic peace, especially to the rights and safety of BIPOC citizens--especially when they corrupt and compromise the mission of law enforcement. FBI Director Christopher Wray has identified far-right groups as America’s most serious domestic threat, specifically pointing to white supremacists.

“Racially-motivated violent extremists over recent years have been responsible for the most lethal activity in the U.S.,” he told congress (<https://www.statesman.com/story/news/politics/elections/2020/10/09/fact-check-did-fbi-director-warn-about-white-supremacist-violence/114251512/>).

For these reasons, a well-funded, duly empowered citizens’ panel *must* be part of the vetting process involved in the hiring of local law enforcement personnel. An exhaustive review of every applicant’s social-media history and any political activities should not only be conducted by the local police department and the police board but

should be “crowdsourced” as well, harnessing the power of the citizens’ panel to ensure that no Facebook post, no Instagram post, no tweet, no Parler post, no police chat-board comment goes unread, and that no evidence of far-right ideological leanings, white-supremacist sympathies, or any other form of bigotry, hate speech, or violent extremism goes unnoticed.

Then, too, social media isn’t the only evidentiary record that should be closely scrutinized: tattoos; any display, whether on vehicles, clothing, or anywhere else, of political messaging, or symbols, slogans, or imagery associated with far-right ideologies, white supremacy, or anti-government extremism such as the Confederate battle flag, the Gadsden (“Don’t Tread on Me”) flag, or the “Thin Blue Line” flag

(<https://harpers.org/archive/2018/07/a-flag-for-trumps-america/>), as well as seemingly innocuous symbols whose meaning has been altered through appropriation (such as the Marvel comics “Punisher” character, which as noted above has become shorthand, on the far-right fringe of police culture, for a *pro-brutality* mindset: <https://gothamist.com/news/nypd-probes-officer-seen-wearing-pro-trump-patches-while-duty>), should be grounds for the disqualification of applicants and, for active-duty officers, disciplinary measures up to and including termination.

Note: Not only should anti-BIPOC, anti-Semitic, anti-LGBTQ, and other types of hate speech be red-flagged, but ideologically motivated far-right bias against the so-called “radical Left,” an animus that has motivated well-documented incidents of police brutality and, no less pernicious, “tactical inaction” (standing by while far-right groups like Proud Boys assault anti-fascist protestors). Far-right ideological bias expressing hostility toward left-wing or left-leaning political or ideological opponents should likewise be grounds for disqualifying an applicant or seriously disciplining an active-duty officer.

Likewise, citizen panels should conduct reviews of individual officers as warranted by citizen complaints. It should go without saying that the public should have unfettered access to officers’ disciplinary records. Officers found to have ties to any of the organizations mentioned above, or listed by hatewatch groups such as The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), or identified by the FBI as domestic-terror threats, should be summarily terminated and, where legally possible, stripped of all benefits. Any democracy worth the name should have zero tolerance for hate in the ranks of law enforcement, whose legal permission to carry a gun and use lethal force demands a level of scrutiny, accountability, and integrity unlike any other government occupation (except the military).

Further Reading:

[“FBI warned of white supremacists in law enforcement 10 years ago. Has anything changed?”](#) PBS.org, October 21, 2016.

“Dismantling White Supremacist Infiltration of the Military and Law Enforcement,” The Century Foundation, January 25, 2021, <https://tcf.org/content/commentary/dismantling-white-supremacist-infiltration-of-the-military-and-law-enforcement/?agreed=1>.

“Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism, White Supremacy, and Far-Right Militancy in Law Enforcement,” Brennan Center for Justice, August 27, 2020, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/hidden-plain-sight-racism-white-supremacy-and-far-right-militancy-law>.

“Unredacted FBI Document Sheds New Light on White Supremacist Infiltration of Law Enforcement: A 2006 intelligence assessment reveals that officials had concerns about the infiltration of police departments for years but failed to warn the public,” *The Intercept*, September 29, 2020, <https://theintercept.com/2020/09/29/police-white-supremacist-infiltration-fbi/>.

“House Hearing on White Supremacy Infiltrating Police Departments, September 29, 2020. The House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties hosted a remote hearing on white supremacists infiltrating police departments,”

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?476341-1/house-hearing-white-supremacy-infiltrating-police-departments>.

ANTI-BIAS TRAINING

MANDATE MORE INTENSIVE ANTI-BIAS TRAINING FOR RECRUITS IN POLICE ACADEMY AND ON AN ANNUAL BASIS FOR ALL ACTIVE-DUTY OFFICERS, REGARDLESS OF RANK

The anti-bias component of recruit training in our local police academy must be rigorously reviewed by an objective, outside expert in anti-bias training and, if needed, revised accordingly. It must be intensive, and should be annually updated to keep abreast of the latest innovations and the newest data in the field of anti-bias training.

Training in de-escalation techniques should be a key component of a recruit's time in police academy, and of subsequent annual workshops--not only for the safety of BIPOC civilians and individuals in the throes of a mental-health crises but for the safety of the officers themselves. According to a 2020 article in *The Washington Post*, "[a recent study](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/deescalation-training-police/2020/10/27/3a345830-14a8-11eb-ad6f-36c93e6e94fb_story.html) shows that one form of de-escalation training run by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) dramatically cut use-of-force incidents and injuries to citizens and officers for one big-city department." PERF's executive director, quoted in the article, notes, "The conventional wisdom was: 'Cops have to make split-second decisions — you're going to get officers hurt.' Now here we are in 2020 and you have a study that says not only was there a decline in use of force and citizen injury, but the biggest decline is in officer injuries."

(https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/deescalation-training-police/2020/10/27/3a345830-14a8-11eb-ad6f-36c93e6e94fb_story.html

)

Regrettably, the warrior mindset that pervades police training, as a rule, regards de-escalation with suspicion or is openly dismissive of it. "Part of the underlying problem is that the police culture does not emphasize methods to defuse situations," Kalfani N. Turè, an assistant professor of criminal justice at Quinnipiac University in

Connecticut, told *The New York Times*. In his 200 hours of training to become a police officer, he noted, “192 hours were dedicated to the use of force and only eight to de-escalation.”

(<https://www.nytimes.com/article/police-tasers.html>)

In addition to undergoing anti-bias training and training in de-escalation techniques as part of their curriculum in police academy, all active-duty officers, regardless of rank, should undergo mandatory annual anti-bias workshops conducted by highly rated workshop leaders with equal expertise in law enforcement and in the history of racial bias in law enforcement and the culture of policing. As one of our members forcefully put it, anti-bias training “*cannot* be a ‘one-and-done.’ It *must* be ongoing.” The “Undoing Racism” training conducted by The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond is highly regarded, and should be considered as a candidate for an outside organization to conduct such workshops (<https://pisab.org/>).

As important, implicit-bias training should be tracked to determine whether more frequent workshops are necessary and how effective such workshops are in addressing conscious as well as unconscious bias.

Moreover, anti-bias workshops and periodic reviews should make use of data gathered during officers' traffic stops, arrests, and other interactions with the public, especially BIPOC individuals.

Body-cam videos would constitute one such data stream, and could be used to determine the effectiveness of anti-bias training and as "teachable moments" for officers.

[Jennifer Eberhardt](#), a Stanford professor and author of [*Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think and Do*](#), "has worked with several police departments to improve their interactions with communities of color," according to a *Time* article. Too often, she notes, "anti-bias training sessions aren't evaluated, and so we don't know how effective they are actually at moving the needle in terms of more equitable policing. ... I and a number of my colleagues were able to help the police department to reduce the number of stops they were making of people who weren't committing any serious crimes. That was the goal. And we did this by pushing officers to ask themselves a simple question before each stop they made: Is this stop intelligence-led? Yes or no. What they meant by intelligence-led was, did I have prior information to tie this specific person to a particular crime? Just adding that question to the form that officers complete during a stop slows them down. They're thinking, *Why am I considering pulling this person over?* We're trying to push them to use the objective standards that they have and tie people to specific crimes rather than *Do I have an*

intuition about this person? It was kind of a change in mindset at the moment of action.” (“She Wrote a Book About Bias. Here’s How She Thinks Police Departments Should Approach Reform,” *Time*, June 8, 2020, <https://time.com/5849172/police-racial-bias/>.)

(See, also,

https://starherald.com/news/local/crime-and-courts/police-train-to-ensure-fair-impartial-policing/article_71104e33-48f4-5672-806d-280fff781837.html:

“ACLU of Nebraska published a report, called “Equality Before the Stop.” The organization suggested strategies from requiring anti-racial bias training to better tracking of required reporting as part of its examination to address “persistent and unfair disparities in traffic stops and to combat racial profiling.” In the report, the ACLU, took a look at agencies that were not reporting traffic stop data, which does evaluate stops based on race.”)

Some factors to consider regarding racializing policing and the “us-versus them” militarized model internalized by some white officers, who regard themselves as occupying armies in the communities of color they police but do not live in:

- “A patchwork system for training police focuses too much on military approaches and not enough on de-escalation and anti-bias. ... A 2016 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, one of

the few on police training, found that 48 percent of police academies followed a military model, compared with 18 percent that emphasized academic achievement.” (*Hechinger Report*, June 28, 2020,

<https://hechingerreport.org/police-education-is-broken-can-it-be-fixed/>)

- “Police recruits in basic training spend a median of 60 hours on firearms instruction and 51 hours on self-defense skills, according to a 2006 Bureau of Justice Statistics report. A median of 11 hours is spent on cultural diversity, and eight hours on mediation and conflict resolution. Bureau of Justice Statistics data show that between 2006 and 2013, academies increased the time recruits spent on firearms by an average of 8 hours, while time spent on community policing rose by an average of just one hour, despite calls for greater focus on this law enforcement approach.” (*Hechinger Report*, June 28, 2020, <https://hechingerreport.org/police-education-is-broken-can-it-be-fixed/>)
- *Also from Hechinger*: “Last year, Northeastern University partnered with the Cambridge Police Department to open a police academy for recruits from across Massachusetts, based on a philosophy of valuing people and human life. Ruben Galindo, the university’s director of public safety who spent 31 years with the Miami-Dade Police Department, said he and the

university police chief, Michael Davis, proposed the idea for the new academy because of the ‘dysfunctional environment’ in existing training programs.

While the Massachusetts academies’ curricula had evolved somewhat to meet [new state requirements](#), said Galindo, the way they operated had not. Instructors bullied and demeaned new recruits and referred to people on the street as “scumbags,” “junkies” and “punks,” he said. “They almost want to break [recruits] down to build them up,” said Galindo of academy instructors, “but we are not preparing officers to go to Vietnam.” While Northeastern’s basic curriculum is the same as that of other programs, its culture is starkly different, he said.

Camden, New Jersey, also altered its approach to training officers after the city’s police department was disbanded in 2013 and replaced with a county-led force. The Camden police department and the community college-run academy from which it recruits now place greater emphasis on conflict resolution, de-escalation and developing awareness of implicit bias, police officials said. Complaints of excessive force dropped from 65 in 2014 to three last year, according to department data. “The whole atmosphere of the academy has changed dramatically since these changes were put in place,” said Donald Borden, president of Camden County College.

(*Hechinger Report*, June 28, 2020,
<https://hechingerreport.org/police-education-is-broken-can-it-be-fixed/>)

- *Food for Thought*: “You can have the best training in the world but at the end of the day it comes down to morals, it comes down to the culture of an organization, it comes down to what’s tolerated.” (*Hechinger Report*, June 28, 2020, <https://hechingerreport.org/police-education-is-broken-can-it-be-fixed/>)[M.D. - DONE.]

BREAK UP “OLD BOYS’ NETWORK”
THROUGH DIVERSITY IN HIRING AND
PROMOTION

**DIVERSIFY LAW ENFORCEMENT AND
INCREASE PERCENTAGE OF BILINGUAL
OFFICERS (LATINX, HAITIAN, ETC.)
THROUGH INNOVATIVE HIRING PRACTICES
THAT ADDRESS LACK OF DIVERSITY IN
LOCAL FORCES; BREAK UP “OLD BOYS’
NETWORK” THAT GIVES FRIENDS OF**

FRIENDS EARLY NOTICE OF UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVANCEMENT AND INSIDE INFORMATION (I.E., ANSWERS TO TEST QUESTIONS) ON CIVIL-SERVICE EXAMS; LAUNCH VIGOROUS OUTREACH BY BIPOC OFFICERS TO YOUTH IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR ABOUT CAREERS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Rockland elected officials, in conjunction with police brass, should take every possible step to ensure that members of communities of color are actively recruited for local departments and alerted to upcoming civil-service exams for departments that are hiring. As well, steps must be taken to ensure that members of the “old boys’ network” don’t get wind of upcoming opportunities for promotion before other officers do. Black and Latino active-duty officers who spoke, confidentially, to our steering committee were emphatic that this was a serious problem, and believed it to be a contributing factor in the shockingly low number of officers of color in Rockland county law enforcement, and in Rockland county police brass. This is a system that perpetuates the overwhelmingly white status quo in local policing, they contended, and which also ensures that

promotions go to friends of friends who learn of available openings and test dates before others do, effectively winnowing out Black and brown candidates. The Guardians, a law-enforcement organization of Black and Latinx officers, should be part of the radical reform that is desperately needed to demolish what is, in effect, a vestige of Jim Crow, alive and well in Rockland county.

Not incidentally, the diversification of law enforcement in Rockland county would come with a side effect that would address a chronic need in our Haitian and Latinx communities: bilingual officers. Chief Wilson (South Nyack PD) claimed in a meeting with our panel that a translation app on his officers' phones had been effective in interactions with non-English-speaking individuals but Haitian and Spanish speakers interviewed by our panel were universal in their incredulity at this claim. Until every Rockland municipality includes at least one Spanish-fluent and Creole-fluent officer, the county should fund a translation service on call, 24/7, for police use countywide.

Food for Thought:

“For a Black Police Officer, Derek Chauvin’s Trial Intensifies a Pull Between Community and Profession,” *Frontline*,
<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/for-a-black-police-offic>

[er-derek-chauvins-trial-intensifies-a-pull-between-community-and-profession/?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ICYMI&utm_content=19xxxx](https://www.iterable.com/blog/derek-chauvins-trial-intensifies-a-pull-between-community-and-profession/?utm_source=Iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=ICYMI&utm_content=19xxxx)

“Increased diversity within law enforcement agencies – defined not only in terms of race and gender, but also other characteristics including religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, language ability, background, and experience – serves as a critically important tool to build trust with communities. This finding is bolstered by decades of research confirming that when members of the public believe their law enforcement organizations represent them, understand them, and respond to them – and when communities perceive authorities as fair, legitimate, and accountable – it deepens trust in law enforcement, instills public confidence in government, and supports the integrity of democracy. This trust is essential to defusing tension, to solving crimes, and to creating a system in which residents view law enforcement as fair and just. Victims and witnesses of crime may not approach or engage with law enforcement if they do not perceive such authorities to be responsive to their experiences and concerns. This trust – and the cooperation it facilitates – also enables officers to more effectively and safely perform their jobs. Research further suggests that increased diversity can make law enforcement agencies more open to reform, more

willing to initiate cultural and systemic changes, and more responsive to the residents they serve. Some have pointed to increased diversity as a catalyst for reform, enabling officers and law enforcement leaders alike to become more introspective and reflective about problems in their departments. A more reflective and open-minded culture in an agency can help drive reform across a range of areas, including civilian oversight, community policing, and racial bias. In addition, while greater workforce diversity alone cannot ensure fair and effective policing, a significant – and growing – body of evidence suggests that diversity can have a positive influence on specific activities and practices of law enforcement agencies.”

http://cdn.cnsnews.com/attachments/advancing_diversity_in_law_enforcement_report_october_2016.pdf

BAN THE USE OF STUN GUNS (See RPPP report, “Ban the Use of Stun Guns”)

Taking our lead, once again, from the Rockland People’s Panel on Policing report, we call on Rockland County Executive Ed Day and Governor Cuomo to ban the use of stun guns (colloquially, “Tasers”) in Rockland County and statewide.

Once seen as the proverbial “magic bullet”--a non-lethal alternative to guns in police interactions with individuals officers regard as an imminent threat--stun guns, which deliver what a *New York Times* article describes as an “excruciating” jolt of 50,000 volts (<https://www.nytimes.com/article/police-tasers.html>), have proven lethal, time and again, when the individual in question has a pre-existing health condition, is already in restraints, is under the influence of narcotics. According to the *Times* article, “If a person is angry, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or has a mental illness, the use of a Taser can exacerbate those conditions and inflame a situation... At least 500 people in the United States have died since 2001 after being shocked with stun guns during an arrest or while in jail, according to a 2012 statement by [Amnesty International, which supports stricter limits on the use of Tasers.](#) ... Amnesty International found that 90 percent of those who died were unarmed. ... [M]edical examiners listed the devices as a contributing factor in more than 60 deaths.” The *Times* cites [a 2012 study](#) showing that a “shock delivered to the chest by a Taser can lead to cardiac arrest and sudden death.”

Further Reading: Christopher Mele and Johnny Diaz, “Tasers: Are These Police Tools Effective and Are They Dangerous?,” *The New York Times*, June 15, 2020,

<https://www.nytimes.com/article/police-tasers.html>.

BAN CHOKEHOLDS AND NECK RESTRAINTS

“For police trainers and criminologists, the [killing of George Floyd] appears to be a textbook case of why many police departments around the country have sought to ban outright or at least limit the use of chokeholds or other neck restraints in recent years: The practices have led too often to high-profile deaths. ... Carl Takei, a senior staff lawyer at the American Civil Liberties Union who focuses on police practices, said ... the A.C.L.U. opposed the technique. “Chokeholds should be banned across the board.”

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/us/knee-neck-george-floyd-death.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article>)

ELIMINATE THE USE OF “NO-KNOCK” WARRANTS

“During a ‘no knock’ SWAT raid, an officer threw a flashbang grenade into the room where the Phonesavanh family was sleeping. It landed, and exploded, inside Baby Bou Bou’s crib. Officers were searching for a relative suspected of selling a small amount of drugs. Neither the suspect nor any drugs were found in the home. At the time this report was published—three weeks

after the raid—Baby Bou Bou was still in a medically-induced coma.” ([ACLU, 2014, *War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Policing*](#))

ENFORCE THE “DUTY TO INTERVENE” RULE AND REVISE IT TO MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE

Rockland authorities should review and revise the obviously ineffectual “duty to intervene” rule, which didn’t save the lives of Eric Garner or George Floyd or countless others, and is demonstrably ineffective in preventing numerous non-fatal incidents of police brutality.

BAN USE OF K9 DOGS FOR CROWD CONTROL; BAN USE OF MOUNTED POLICE FOR CROWD CONTROL

These needlessly violent, unpredictable and potentially fatal methods of crowd control, with their ugly historical echoes of the use of Alsatian dogs on Black civil-rights protestors in the Jim Crow South, are yet more evidence of the militarization of policing, and of

the hostility of conservative elements in police culture to protestors exercising their First Amendment rights.

Moreover, K9 dogs and mounted-unit horses are expensive. What, exactly, is the cost to Rockland taxpayers of the mounted unit mentioned on the Rockland Sheriff's Office website, a unit that has "responded to the scenes of labor disputes"--a constitutionally sanctioned exercise of First Amendment rights, it should be noted--and "participates in community policing functions like crowd control" and, inexplicably, is "currently assigned to the Villages of Nyack," among others, villages not generally noted for violent unrest in the streets. See:

https://www.rocklandcountysheriffoffice.com/police_units.html)

Mounted units should be disbanded or reduced to a bare minimum, used exclusively for searches for lost or injured persons and never for crowd control. As well, they should be eliminated from frivolous uses such as parades (which double as a show of force, intended to send a message to community activists and reinforce perceptions, corrosive to police-community relations, of law enforcement as an "occupying army"). K9 units should likewise be reduced to the bare minimum for antiterrorism and narcotics-investigation use, and prohibited from use at protests.

BAN THE USE OF “KETTLING” STRATEGY OF CORRALLING AND TRAPPING PROTESTORS

“The protesters had not seen that [riot police](#) had flooded the plaza behind them, boxing them in. The maneuver was a law enforcement tactic called kettling. The police encircle protesters so that they have no way to exit from a park, city block or other public space, and then charge in and make [arrests](#). For the next 20 minutes in Downtown Brooklyn, officers swinging batons turned a demonstration that had been largely peaceful into a scene of chaos.”

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/nyregion/police-kettling-protests-nyc.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>)

“In theory, the technique allows police officers to slowly release small groups out the kettle as a way of defusing tension. In practice, however, it’s deeply problematic. “You’re interfering with people’s right and ability to do what the first amendment protects, which is to go out in the street and tell the government what you think,” says Jonathan Smith, Executive Director of the Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. “It also punishes the innocent for the misconduct of the few. That is also constitutionally infirm. To seize somebody, under the fourth amendment, you need

to have a basis for doing so.” But when kettling happens, large swathes of people are grouped together indiscriminately.”(<https://www.gq.com/story/what-is-kettling>)

Further Reading:

“DC Police Again Turn to ‘Kettling,’ a Controversial Crowd Control Technique: The cops boxed in protesters at Swann Street last night. The tactic is illegal in most instances.”

(<https://www.washingtonian.com/2020/06/02/dc-police-again-turn-to-kettling-a-controversial-crowd-control-technique/>)

REMOVE POLICE FROM SCHOOLS (See RPPP report section of the same name)

A member of our panel adds, “I don’t believe in policing in schools. Presence for marketing purposes [i.e., encouraging young people of color to consider careers in law enforcement] might be different, and *should* look different in terms of increasing favorable reputation [for the police] through scheduled visits, lessons that are vetted by administration and offered to students, perhaps at assemblies, in the same way that fire-safety lessons are given by firefighters.

Food for Thought (from resources provided by the Rockland Coalition to End the New Jim Crow):

The problem:

- [How the School-to-Prison Pipeline Functions](#) (Video, 2 min, The Root, 2017)
- [The School to Prison Pipeline, Explained](#) (Article, Justice Policy Institute, 2015)
- [The School-To-Prison Pipeline Debate: SROs & Why Student Arrests Are Increasing...](#) (Video, 16 min, Rogue Rocket, 2020)

Solutions:

- [Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline](#) (Video, 11 min, Ted Talk by Principal Benjamin Williams, 2019)
- [School to Prison Pipeline as told by Richmond Youth Advocates](#) (Video, 7 min, Ted Talk by Youth for Rise Advocacy Network, 2017)
- [A Teacher's Guide to Rerouting the Pipeline](#) (Article with helpful infographic, Learning for Justice, 2013)
- [Counselors Not Cops: Ending the Regular Presence of Law Enforcement in Schools](#) (Policy Recommendations, Dignity in Schools, 2016)”

- Create a working relationship between community officers, local police departments and social service agencies as collaborative partners (Nyack center, Center for safety and change, YMCA, churches, shelters, rehabilitation centers and food distribution sites)

In-depth analysis from The Henry C. Lee Institute of Forensic Science at the University of New Haven: [Smart Policing Collaboration Strategies](#).

END MARIJUANA ARRESTS AND PROSECUTIONS (See RPPP report section of the same name)

End marijuana arrests. Despite the decriminalization of marijuana use, the police continue to use it as a pretext for stops and searches that disproportionately affect BIPOC people (even in New Jersey, where marijuana was recently *legalized*).

Food for Thought:

The Problem:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/13/nyregion/marijuana-arrests-nyc-race.html>
- <https://innocenceproject.org/racial-disparities-in-nyc-arrest-data-marijuana-possession/>
- <https://www.vox.com/identities/2018/5/14/17353040/racial-disparity-marijuana-arrests-new-york-city-nypd>
- <https://theuncovery.org/>

The Solution:

- The ACLU recommends legalization and until that can be achieved nationwide, decriminalization and deprioritization to help reduce these racial disparities that cause harm to communities of color.
- However, the gaps suggest that simply deprioritizing marijuana enforcement, an effort New York Mayor Bill de Blasio began when he entered office in 2014, is not enough to erase racial differences in arrests. The *Times* notes that in the first three months of 2018, roughly 4,000 people were arrested for marijuana possession; 89 percent of them were black or Hispanic.

See, also:

- <https://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/fairness-is-an-issue-in-clearing-low-level-marijuana-convictions>
- <https://www.aclu.org/blog/criminal-law-reform/drug-law-reform/marijuana-legalization-racial-justice-issue>

CREATE OR AMEND POLICY RELATED TO THE DETENTION OF CHILDREN

The Problem:

- Between 2003 and 2013 (the most recent data available), the rate of youth committed to juvenile facilities after an adjudication of delinquency fell by 47 percent. Every state witnessed a drop in its commitment rate, including 19 states where the commitment rates fell by more than half. Despite this remarkable achievement, the racial disparities endemic to the juvenile justice system did not improve over these same 10 years. Youth of color remain far more likely to be committed than white youth. Between 2003 and 2013, the racial gap between black and white youth in secure commitment increased by 15%.

[\(https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/racial-disparities-in-youth-commitments-and-arrests/\)](https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/racial-disparities-in-youth-commitments-and-arrests/)

The Solution:

- “Along with policing reform to respond to youthful behavioral issues without relying on high levels of arrests of youth of color, other actors in the juvenile justice system can decrease racial disparities in commitments. Prosecutors’ and judges’ decisions have not caused the increase in commitment disparities, but they also have not mitigated them.” (The Sentencing Project)

Further Reading:

“Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Juvenile Justice Systems: Promising Practices,” National Juvenile Justice Network,
<http://www.njjn.org/our-work/reducing-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-juvenile-justice-systems-promising-practices>

**END LAW ENFORCEMENT
COLLABORATION WITH ICE
(Immigration and Customs Enforcement)**

AND (CBP) (Customs and Border Patrol)
(See RPPP report section of the same
name)

We echo the RPPP's demand that law enforcement in Rockland County sever its relationship with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) immediately, ending all collaboration with the agency in any form. As one of our members put it, Rockland authorities must "relieve local officers from having any enforcement of immigration issues" in order to "alleviate tensions among community members who might have a fear response due to immigration status." And, as she points out, doing so would "also help all members [of our communities] access public servants without fear of deportation." (According to a member of RPPP, in a Zoom chat thread, "the RCAN (Rockland Citizens Action Network) social-justice action group met with [Sheriff] Falco and all of the [Rockland] police chiefs [four years ago] to get them to commit that they would honor the NYS mandate issued by the AG's office in reaction to the Trump Muslim ban, & not cooperate with ICE. They agreed, at that time." If this is true, Rockland law enforcement has *already* committed to severing its ties with ICE, and has only to make good on that promise.)

Under President Donald J. Trump, ICE was militarized and weaponized to hunt down, detain, and deport undocumented immigrants in accord with his administration's undisguisedly xenophobic, ethnonationalist ideology. Tendentious as this language may sound, President Trump's use of ICE as an instrument of state terror is abundantly evidenced. "Many of ICE's removal tactics take away even the right to a fair hearing in court, as the government rushes to judgment and tries to ram people through a rubber-stamp system that ignores individual circumstances," notes the ACLU (<https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses>). "These enforcement programs pose a variety of threats to civil liberties," including "the constitutional guarantee of equal protection and freedom from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and national origin. ICE's enforcement practices also impose heavy social costs, tearing American families apart and undermining community trust in law enforcement."

CBP is part of the problem, too: "CBP's militarization of the border region has produced rampant abuses ranging from racial profiling to excessive force. CBP uses interior checkpoints and roving patrols located far from the border to apprehend individuals who are not recent border crossers." (ACLU) They've been used to intimidate and brutalize protestors exercising their First Amendment rights, too (see,

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/23/trump-portland-protests-homeland-security-officers>).

Nor have these abuses ceased entirely under the Biden administration: “While Biden has begun the extensive process of undoing some of Trump’s cruelest anti-immigration policies, under his administration, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has continued to operate unhinged, deporting over 26,000 people, many of whom are Black immigrants, since Biden took office.”

(*Truthout.org*,

<https://truthout.org/articles/immigrants-will-continue-to-die-as-long-as-agencies-like-ice-and-cbp-exist/>)

Rockland county is home to a wide array of immigrant communities, among them a large Haitian community with deep historical roots as well as Mexican and Central and South American communities. Agencies like ICE and CBP, tacitly authorized by the Trump administration to “go rogue,” often in defiance of local law, are a threat both to the peace of mind and civil rights of our diverse communities *and* to the law-enforcement agencies that depend on their cooperation to solve crimes and apprehend suspects. They have no home here.

Further Reading:

“ENTERING THE TRUMP ICE AGE:CONTEXTUALIZING THE NEW IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT REGIME,”

<https://case.edu/law/sites/case.edu.law/files/2019-10/Entering%20the%20Trump%20Ice%20Age%20Contextualizing%20the%20New%20Immigration%20Enforcement%20Regime%20%282017%2C%2069%20p.%29.pdf>

“Abolishing ICE is the radical idea America needs to be talking about,”

https://www.inquirer.com/philly/columnists/will_bunch/abolish-ice-trump-inhumane-immigration-policy-human-rights-20180315.html

“Worksite Immigration Raids,”

<https://www.nilc.org/issues/workersrights/worksite-raids/>

“These officers used to terrorise immigrants. Now they go after US citizens,”

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jul/23/trump-portland-protests-homeland-security-officers>

“ICE and Border Patrol Abuses,”

<https://www.aclu.org/issues/immigrants-rights/ice-and-border-patrol-abuses>

“Policy Brief | Disentangling Local Law Enforcement from Federal Immigration Enforcement,”

<https://immigrantjustice.org/research-items/policy-brief-disentangling-local-law-enforcement-federal-immigration-enforcement>

INVESTIGATE ROCKLAND COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT (See RPPP report section of the same name)

As advised by the RPPP, a rigorous investigation of the Sheriff’s Department must be conducted, focusing not only on troubling rumors (cited by Rockland Legislator James Foley in a meeting with our panel) that Sheriff Falco uses his authority and influence corruptly, literally *jailing* opponents, and on troubling incidents at the Rockland County Jail he oversees, among them “the abuse of incarcerated women of color,” symptomatic of “a culture of racism in Rockland law enforcement, which relies on the complicity of its leadership” (RPPP report), but also on Sheriff Falco’s racial biases, on full display in his racist posts on social media, documented by the *Rockland Journal-News*:

<https://www.lohud.com/story/news/local/rockland/2020/07/22/sheriff-louis-falco-racist-facebook-posts/5443303002/>.

Food for Thought:

“There’s a Shocking Lack of Accountability for Sheriffs,”

Counterspin,

<https://fair.org/slider/theres-a-shocking-lack-of-accountability-for-sheriffs/>

“Confronting the Demographics of Power: America’s Sheriffs,” Women Donors Network,

<https://wholeads.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/reflecteddemocracy-americassheriffs-06.04.2020.pdf>

DEMILITARIZE THE POLICE (See RPPP report section of the same name)

In lockstep with the RPPP, we demand the demilitarization of the police, specifically the outlawing of military-style training, the use of military tactics, and the employment of military weaponry, much of which has been donated to local law enforcement by the U.S. military. The militarization of local law enforcement across the U.S. fosters an us-against-them, crypto-fascist “warrior” mentality that is

fundamentally inimical to law enforcement's role in a democratic society, trampling on the civil rights of lawful protestors and abusing, brutalizing, and sometimes killing the very citizens police are sworn to "serve and protect," especially BIPOC people. *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces* by the investigative journalist Radley Balko takes a close—and sobering—look at this phenomenon.

Food for Thought:

From "Turning Back the Tide: Promising Efforts to Demilitarize Police Departments," by PolicyLink, a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity:

- [Local law enforcement units too often treat low-income neighborhoods populated by people of color—communities where people strive to live, learn, work, play, and pray in peace and harmony—as if they are enemy territory. Youth of color who should be growing up in supportive, affirming environments are instead presumed to be criminals and relentlessly subjected to aggressive police tactics that result in unnecessary fear, arrests, injuries, and deaths. This approach prevents police from being seen as trusted community partners.](#)

undermining neighborhood safety when coordinated efforts are most needed.

- The militarization of police departments further erodes the trust that should exist between residents and the police who serve them. The proliferation of machine guns, armored vehicles and aircraft, and camouflage in local law enforcement units does not help police-community relations, the future of our cities, or our country.

Open Letter to President Obama calling for de-militarization of law enforcement, published in *The Washington Post*: “Deterring crime and protecting communities should not involve military weaponry. Effective policing strategies and community relationships will not be advanced if police departments continue to act as an occupying force in neighborhoods. The Administration must suspend programs that transfer military equipment into the hands of local police departments and create guidelines that regulate and monitor the use of military equipment that has already been distributed.”

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/ad/public/static/letter/index.html>

USE BODY CAMS AND STRICTLY ENFORCE THE REQUIREMENT THAT THEY BE TURNED ON WHENEVER AN OFFICER IS ON DUTY

We demand the implementation of police body cameras and, crucially, a strict policy of usage, mandating that cameras be turned on whenever an officer is on duty.

Food for Thought:

[Body cameras are seen as key to police reform. But do they increase accountability?](#)

[The Benefits of Body-Worn Cameras: New Findings from a ...](#)

EMBRACE COMMUNITY POLICING, INCLUDING FOOT PATROLS, WHEREVER POSSIBLE

We urge elected officials to consider instituting the community-policing model, utilizing foot patrols wherever practicable.

Further Reading:

<https://www.policefoundation.org/publication/engaging-communities-one-step-at-a-time/>

<https://whyy.org/segments/the-police-experiment-that-changed-what-we-know-about-foot-patrol/>

<https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/foot-patrol-and-community-policing-past-practices-and-future>

https://www.policefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PF_Engaging-Communities-One-Step-at-a-Time_Final.pdf

<https://www.police1.com/patrol-issues/articles/foot-patrol-works-more-of-it-will-reduce-violence-h9jmliiCrupaJXk2/>

REVIEW & REALLOCATE POLICE BUDGETS AND RESOURCES (See RPPP report section of the same name)

Food for Thought:

From the RPPP report:

“In 2019, the top two town police salaries in New York State were

Clarkstown and Orangetown, ranking number one and two, respectively, and the number three village police salary in New York State is South Nyack/Grand View-on-Hudson,” two villages with a combined population of 3,677 and a relatively low rate of violent crime.

Further Reading:

“More cops. Is it the answer to fighting crime? Declining numbers of cops nationwide worry big city officials, but experts say there is little evidence that more cops equals less crime.” Simone Weichselbaum and Wendi C. Thomas, The Marshall Project, *USA Today*, February 13, 2019

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/investigations/2019/02/13/marshall-project-more-cops-dont-mean-less-crime-experts-say/2818056002/>

INVEST IN COMMUNITY-BASED MEDIATION APPROACHES

We demand our elected officials, working with law enforcement, adopt community-based mediation services for de-escalation.

Conflicts between individuals that are minor can be resolved through mediation rather than arrest, which can become a financial burden and barrier to employment.

Problem:

“Racial Impact Disparities - According to Howell, Babe K, (2009), the mass arrests in New York City display lack of proportionality and disparate impacts based on race. That is, the mass arrests made during the years aggressive misdemeanor policing strategy was in effect in New York City had a disproportionate impact on communities of color, particularly Blacks and Latinos. The long-term impacts associated with arrests compounded race problems. The perception of unfairness on the part of the racial minorities as a result of the racial discrepancies in crime enforcement by the criminal justice system might lead to procedural justice costs and the unwillingness by Latina and Black citizens to comply with the law. As pointed out earlier, real economic losses in terms of lost earnings, related surcharges associated with mass arrests, decreased employment opportunities, obstacles to public housing and violations of arrest and convictions are collateral negative effects of aggressive ‘get tough’ policing.”

https://www.umes.edu/uploadedFiles/_WEBSITES/AJCJS/Content/VOL%2011%20KAMALU%20FINAL.pdf

Solution:

“Further, as observed by Shernan and Eck (2002), zero tolerance or aggressive policing has long term societal impacts. There is no doubt that its aggressive posture has given rise to increased public concern, dissatisfaction and complaints against the police, particularly in minority communities. As Skogan (2007) reminded us, the unwanted side effects of aggressive policing is enormous and long lasting because a bad experience is four to fourteen times as great as that of having a positive experience and as such the impact of negative encounters of the public with police resulting from “get tough” policies whether effective for crime reduction or not can have deleterious and irreversible effects on policing legitimacy and ultimately impair their main functions. As he further argued, “process” is more important for the victims of crime and those who come into contact with the police than “outcome”. In effect, the police create a risk factor for crime simply by using bad manners because the less respectful the police are to suspects and citizens, the less people will comply with the law. Therefore, changing police “style” and “strategy” may be as important as focusing on police “substance”. Hence, the Police-Community Relations (Community Policing) is both the way to go and the wave of the future.”

https://www.umes.edu/uploadedFiles/_WEBSITES/AJCJS/Content/VOL%202011%20KAMALU%20FINAL.pdf

Further Reading:

“HISTORY OF COMMUNITY MEDIATION
IN THE U.S.,” <https://2mediate.org/history1.html>

**DEVELOP A COUNTYWIDE MENTAL
HEALTH SUPPORT NETWORK (See RPPP
report section of the same name)**

We demand that Rockland authorities create a mental-health crisis program, as advised by The Mental Health Committee of the Rockland Coalition to End the New Jim Crow (RCENJC) in their presentation to our panel, to relieve police of the burden of responding to 911 calls about people in mental-health crises, whether from mental illness or substance abuse, situations law enforcement is ill-equipped to handle and which too often end in tragedy for the individual in crisis. We agree with the MHC’s recommendation that such 911 calls be routed to a trained mental-health response team and, as important, that 911 operators

be trained to make on-the-spot decisions about whether a situation should be handled by police or mental-health professionals.

It bears noting that a highly effective program was previously in use in Rockland county, but was defunded. It should be revived, with robust funding. In the chat window of the March 10, 2021 Zoom presentation by the RPPP of its report, a mental-health professional with inside knowledge of the program wrote, “We had a program within the dept of mental health in RC that was funded by Medicaid in the county. We went on calls with police. ... The legislature shut it down in 2014. Laid off all employees. ... We fought hard to keep it...covered our own salaries with Medicaid. All of us were crisis trained and members of NYS crisis team.”

**CREATE A DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL
OF RIGHTS (See RPPP report section of the
same name)**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our police-reform panel of community stakeholders--the Executive Order 203 panel of South Nyack/Grand View-on-Hudson, mandated by Governor Andrew Cuomo's executive order of the same name--was composed of elected officials (Mayors Larry Lynn and Bonnie Christian of Grand View-on-Hudson and South Nyack, respectively, and South Nyack Trustees Michael Lockett and Catherine McCue), law enforcement (Chief Daniel Wilson and Sergeant Ryan Eirand of the South Nyack/Grand View-on-Hudson joint police force), community leaders (some religious, some educators, some from racial-justice organizations such as the NAACP), as well as engaged citizens.

But our panel was led, we are proud to note, by a six-member steering committee that was majority BIPOC, and which included no members of law enforcement or elected officials.³

We lobbied for this level of autonomy not only because we strongly believed BIPOC members of our villages should set the agenda for

³ The RPPP report takes note of this and gives our panel the highest rating of all the official E.O. 203 panels it investigated. All other panels were dominated by the police and their political allies; they, not communities of color, set the agenda and chaired meetings, many of which were conducted out of public view, with neither videoconference recordings nor even minutes posted on official municipal websites. Unsurprisingly, their reports are, not to put too fine a point on it, eyewash, designed to "check every box" perfunctorily in order to receive the state funds dependent on the successful completion of these reports.

our report, but because we wanted to ensure they could speak freely, without fear of retaliation from law enforcement or their supporters. For that reason, the only steering committee member whose name appears on this collectively conceived, collectively written, collectively approved report is that of South Nyack resident Mark Dery, who is white. Nonetheless, it cannot be stressed enough that the BIPOC members of our steering committee were deeply involved with this report at every stage of its evolution; it is the product, in large part, of their tireless efforts and unswerving commitment to racial and social justice.

We owe an enormous debt of gratitude to our comrades in the Rockland People's Panel on Policing, whose exhaustively researched, hard-hitting report we relied on extensively, and whose moral courage blazed the trail we follow.

We are indebted, as well, to the Black and brown officers who met with us to share their boots-on-the-ground experiences as officers of color on almost entirely white forces, and what they believe should be done to address racial bias in policing and police culture. We are grateful, too, to the members of The Mental Health Committee of the Rockland Coalition to End the New Jim Crow (RCENJE), many of them BIPOC individuals; to Dr. Alexandria Connally of Nyack Public Schools' Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Innovation;

and to members of racial-justice and police-reform groups in Rockland, all of whom shared generously with us their innovative, inspired approaches to what too often seem like intractable problems.

Finally, we appreciate the enlightened willingness of South Nyack Mayor Bonnie Christian, Grand View-on-Hudson Mayor Larry Lynn, and SN/GV Chief of Police Daniel Wilson to do what few, if any, other municipalities in Rockland have done: defer to the very people who are the focus of Executive Order 203, namely, people of color. Their decision is an example of transparency and accountability in local government and a more progressive approach to police-community relations, and therefore deserves commendation.

We were heartened, as well, by Chief Wilson's and Sergeant Eirand's commitment to attend all meetings of our E.O. 203 panel at large (as opposed to our steering committee meetings, which were closed to non-members), and to participate thoughtfully in our discussions. It is our sincere hope that they'll read this report and consider seriously its recommendations. Even more important, we hope they'll internalize the painful lessons it teaches and use those hard-won insights to stand strong, wherever their careers take them, in defense of a more racially just, compassionate policing that truly serves and protects the communities they police and honors the badges they wear.