State of Connecticut PA 19-90

Police Accountability and Transparency Task Force

Draft preliminary report on Priorities/Recommendations

June 10, 2020

Introduction

Public Act No. 19-90 established a task force to study police transparency and accountability. The task force is comprised of 11 voting members and 3 non-voting members, with two of the members serving as co-chairs. To date one chair has been appointed. Per Pa 19-90, the task force shall examine:

(1) Police officer interactions with individuals who are individuals with a mental, intellectual or physical disability;

(2) the feasibility of police officers who conduct traffic stops issuing a receipt to each individual being stopped that includes the reason for the stop and records the demographic information of the person being stopped; and

(3) any other police officer and transparency and accountability issue the task force deems appropriate

The task force shall issue two reports, a preliminary and final report, the latter of which shall be by December 31, 2020. This document shall serve as the task force’s preliminary report.

Preliminary Priorities and Recommendations

The most recent meeting of the task force occurred on June 8, 2020. In the wake of the killing of George Floyd by a white Minneapolis police officer and the ensuing social unrest across the state, nation and world, the task force was asked by the Governor, the Attorney General and the Judiciary Committee chairs to act urgently to address the multitude of issues brought to light in this and other recent interactions between police and members of the black community. The following recommendations stem from the conversations held at the June 8 meeting.

Universally agreed by all members is the utilization of President Obama’s 21st Century Policing Task Force Final Report¹ and Implementation Guide² to form a basis from which the task force can systematically address police accountability and transparency in Connecticut. This document is not unfamiliar to Connecticut, as it was also used as a guide for the February 2018 Final Report of the CT Police Training Task Force, whose recommendations and subsequent action were also discussed in the June 8th meeting.

¹ https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/taskforce_finalreport.pdf
The 21st Century Policing report lays out 6 pillars that form the foundation for change, from which 59 recommendations and 92 action items are systematically laid out as mechanisms for this change. The pillars are:

1. Building Trust and Legitimacy
2. Policy and Oversight
3. Technology and Social Media
4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction
5. Training and Education
6. Officer Wellness and Safety

Through input from each task force member, and utilizing the six pillars as reference points, the task force makes the following 20 preliminary priorities and recommendations (highlighted and numbered below):

**Pillar One: Building Trust and Legitimacy**

Role of policing in past injustices • Culture of transparency and accountability • Procedural justice: internal legitimacy • Positive nonenforcement activities • Research crime-fighting strategies that undermine or build public trust • Community surveys • Workforce diversity • Decouple federal immigration enforcement from local policing

1. **Change the culture of policing – adopt a guardian versus warrior culture of policing.**
   a. Adopt procedural justice framework as for internal and external policies and practices to guide police interactions with the citizens they serve.
   b. Incorporate restorative justice practices into policing using community-based organizations.
2. **Publicly address the role of policing in past injustices.**
3. **Task Force should conduct regional listening sessions, coupled with community surveys, by the end of the summer to seek public input in the final report.**
4. **Examine police officers’ interactions with individuals with a mental, intellectual, or physical disability.**
   a. Ensure resources are available for diversionary programs
5. **Ensure each officer commits to 500hrs of community engagement activities within Connecticut’s major urban centers as prior to receiving initial officer certification.**
6. **Duty to intervene**
   a. Make it mandatory that officers report misconduct and intervene when they see wrongdoing, with criminal penalties if they fail to do so.

**Pillar Two: Policy & Oversight**

• Community input and involvement • Use of force • Nonpunitive peer review of critical incidents • Scientifically supported identification procedures • Demographic data on all detentions • Mass demonstration policies • Local civilian oversight • No quotas for tickets for revenue • Consent and informed search and seizure • Officer identification and reason for stops • Prohibit profiling and
discrimination, in particular as it relates to LGBT and gender nonconforming populations • Encourage shared services between jurisdictions • National Register of Decertified Officers

7. **Develop an independent external investigating authority** Other states empower the Attorney General to play this role. This authority should fulfill the following goals:
   a. Public must trust that deadly use of force incidents and incidents involving excessive use of force are investigated with credibility and integrity.
   b. Mechanism for state to conduct a patterns and practice investigation when departments are accused of civil rights violations.

8. **Prohibit chokeholds, and neck restraints**
9. **Implement mandatory psychological evaluations into the recertification process**
10. **Reform Internal Affairs**
    c. Ensure that the internal affairs process is transparent and accountable
    d. Community involvement in internal affairs investigations

11. **Reform citizen complaint process**
    e. Require departments to accept electronic complaints and clearly lay out complaint procedure on their website
    f. Create a statewide public database of police complaints by department and officer, listed by status (filed, pending, outcome)

12. **Make all departmental policies and procedures available online**
13. **Identify state labor issues that prevent police administrators from easily removing unfit officers**
    g. Explore fair police union contracts

**Pillar Three: Technology & Social Media**

• New technology standards for compatibility and interoperability • Address human rights and privacy concerns • Technology designed considering local needs and people with special needs • Body-worn cameras and other emerging technologies • Public records laws—update to keep up with emerging technologies • Transparency and accessibility for the community through technology • Develop new less than lethal technology

14. **Evaluate the effectiveness of other less than lethal force tools**
15. **Mandate body-worn cameras in all departments**
16. **Ensure all policies, procedures and data are transparent and publicly accessible through the internet**

**Pillar Four: Community Policing & Crime Reduction**

Community engagement in managing public safety • Infuse community policing throughout law enforcement organizations • Use multidisciplinary teams • Protect the dignity of all • Neighborhood problem solving • Reduce aggressive law enforcement that stigmatizes youth • Address the school-to-prison pipeline • Youth engagement

17. **End broken windows policing**
   a. Stops for low-level administrative and equipment offenses should be secondary (i.e. police can not longer stop a car for these reasons)
b. Eliminate consent searches of motor vehicles

18. Mandate community oversight of all police departments (i.e. Civilian Review Boards).

**Pillar Five: Training & Education**

High quality training and training innovation hubs • Engage community members in trainings • Leadership training for all officers • National postgraduate program of policing for senior executives • Incorporate the following in basic recruit and in-service trainings: o Policing in a democratic society o Implicit bias and cultural responsiveness o Social interaction skills and tactical skills o Disease of addiction o Crisis intervention teams (mental health) o Reinforce policies on sexual misconduct and sexual harassment o How to work with LGBT and gender nonconforming populations • Higher education for law enforcement officers • Use of technology to improve access to and quality of training • Improve field training officer programs

19. Develop a strategy to achieve accreditation (State or National) for all police departments in CT

**Pillar Six: Officer Wellness & Safety**

Multifaceted officer safety and wellness initiative • Promote officer wellness and safety at every level • Scientifically supported shift lengths • Tactical first aid kit and training • Anti-ballistic vests for every officer • Collect information on injuries and near misses as well as officer deaths • Require officers to wear seat belts and bulletproof vests • Pass peer review error management legislation • Smart car technology to reduce accidents

20. Ensure early intervention through assistance, correction action and discipline

Next Steps: Additional priorities for consideration

- Review recommendations from:
  - Campaign Zero [https://www.joincampaignzero.org/](https://www.joincampaignzero.org/)

- How to organize work:
  - Subcommittees
    - Structure
    - Adding Community Members
    - Legislative, Administrative, and general recommendations
  - Community listening sessions
  - Final Report