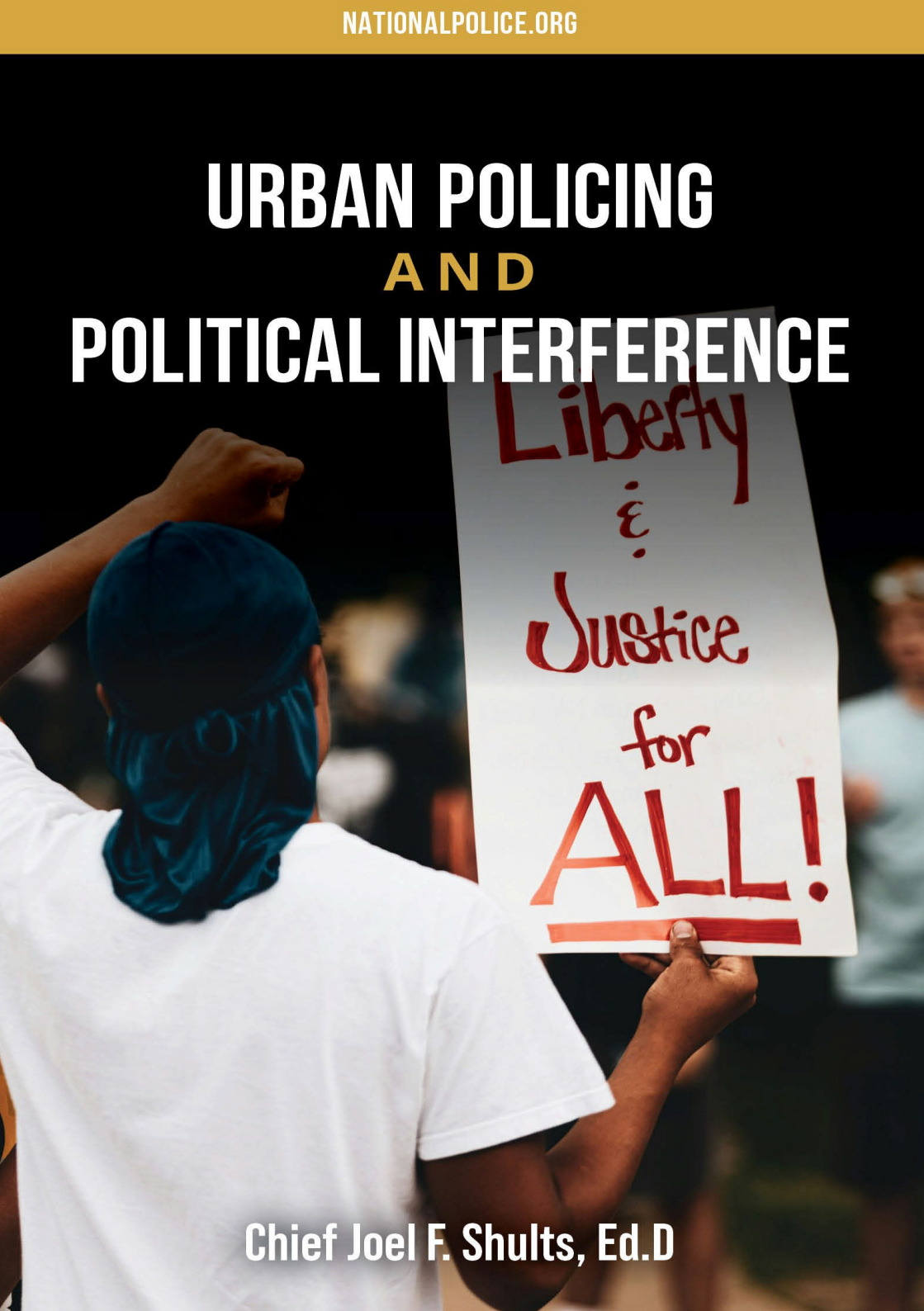


# URBAN POLICING AND POLITICAL INTERFERENCE



Liberty  
&  
Justice  
for  
ALL!

Chief Joel F. Shults, Ed.D

The National Police Association's free Law Enforcement education series is designed for home school, classroom, or independent learning. As part of our nonprofit educational mission, it prepares you for careers in public safety. This series is authored by [Chief Joel F. Shults, Ed.D.](#)

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## Chicago and Other Cities Ponder Humane Treatment of its Police Officers

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With 11, 669 police officers as of March of 2022, Chicago PD is one of America's largest police forces. If this number sounds big, consider that it is down by 300 officers since the start of the year, down over 1300 since 2019 from 2021 levels. During the same time, violent crime has skyrocketed.

Some observers blame the loss of police officers on "the great resignation" during the pandemic years of remote working when the value of working came into question. While there may be some truth to that, the harsher truth is that oppressive hours and loss of leave time and days off may simply be too much to ask in a city where the Mayor's indifference and hostility to its police officers have eroded morale. Mayor Lightfoot insists that police have plenty of time off.

The recent proposal by an informal public safety caucus of aldermen to restrict canceling of days off and mandatory overtime and convene a hearing on mental health issues occurred against the backdrop of three suicides of Chicago officers. Not only are those concerned with policing in Chicago – which obviously excludes the Mayor – worried about police officer wellness, but implications for recruiting replacements.

Chicago is not alone in losing officers. The COVID vaccine mandate pushed several CPD officers to take retirement. Others don't want to accept the increased risk of being killed, assaulted, sued, or prosecuted for

doing their job. Many of those who left with retirement eligibility represent vital legacy knowledge for the department, described by leaders as a “brain drain” for the agency. The loss of supervisors and managers who would be responsible for implementing police reform and training measures could slow any needed changes in the agency.

Ralph Cilento, a retired NYPD lieutenant commander of detectives and adjunct instructor of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, is quoted in a Chicago Tribune article saying “Bottom line is that there is a scorched-earth policy when it comes to police. All of this anti-police sentiment is all manifesting itself in people that can leave, will leave. So you know, people are not going to do 28, 30 years anymore. They’re hitting their minimum requirement and getting out.”

City representatives refuse to paint the picture as a crisis, claiming that the loss of officers has had no effect on the city’s crime rate, body counts notwithstanding. Still, the city is lowering its hiring standards to include more potential candidates. Historically, these shifts in standards have resulted in long-term problems for police departments.

Exit interviews with other police departments suffering major loss of officers are revealing. Portland Police Bureau’s departing officers had strong words to share about feeling a lack of city leadership, burnout, and mental and physical health concerns. Seventy percent specifically brought up lacking support from the city as the reason for leaving. Interviews requested by media outlets showed the sentiment of one detective was

typical: “The community shows zero support. The city council are raging idiots, in addition to being stupid. Additionally, the mayor and council ignore actual facts on crime and policing in favor of radical leftist and anarchists’ fantasy. What’s worse is ppb command (It. and above) is arrogantly incompetent and cowardly.”

Staffing shortages with the San Diego, California Police Department spiral a loss of public support. Jared Wilson, president of the San Diego Police Officers Association, told the Los Angeles Times that officers from specialty units have been pulled back to patrol, reducing crime intervention efforts. “We’re at the point where we’re just chasing 911 calls,” Wilson said. “We’re not really doing a whole lot of preventative policing or patrolling. It’s really toxic for our community, for community trust and relationships.”

The city’s vaccine mandate staffing shortages that require overtime or constrain time off, a continuing call for changes to police practices, and jobs at other departments that offer higher pay and better retirement packages, and negative narratives about law enforcement have demoralized officers who are leaving SDPD. Similar complaints were noted in exit interviews with Oakland, California PD, including a lack of effective leadership.

Seattle’s exit interviews of police officers tossing the badge also sound familiar. Despite the officer’s boasting about the great training and access to great coffee, ex-officers report hyper-aggressive oversight, non-supportive city government, no backing from city, and increasingly spineless legal system. New Orleans’

exiting police officers cited punitive discipline, restrictive policies, poor equipment, and lack of support from the administration. As reported on nola.com Nathan Gex, a 23-year NOPD veteran who left for another agency said “I can no longer watch the citizens suffer to violence and crime while the department is not allowed to do the basic service of protecting the citizens of this community.”

America is losing police officers who love serving and protecting. The grief and frustration of not being able to do that which they feel called to do is palpable in these exit interviews. Ultimately, they have only one demand – to let them do the work they were hired to do.



## Small Agencies on the Brink

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Let's define what a small agency is by doing some math. With 168 hours in every week, assuming a 40 hour week and we want 24-hour coverage, that will require 4.2 officers. Those officers will need to take sick leave, vacation, and holidays which could amount to 30 additional days they are not available to work a shift, which 4.6 hours a week needing shift coverage. So we'll add another .8 of an officer to make an even 5 officers. Do we want some training for our small force? That will take at least 10 more shifts away per officer that will add an additional deficit of 400 hours. Add to that an hour per week per officer for being in court and other activities that remove them from being on duty and we need at least 7 officers to keep a patrol car on duty.

Of course, we probably need a chief to keep up with administrative responsibilities and we would really like to have at least 2 officers on duty at least, so we're up to 15 officers. That's my definition of a small agency - any law enforcement agency whose ability to provide 24-hour service with a reasonable response time whose service would be significantly hampered by one officer's absence.

A recent mass resignation in the town of Kimberling City in Missouri will be leaving the town in the Branson, Missouri region and claiming the title of the bass fishing capital of the Ozarks, without a police force in a matter of days. The resignations were not in protest, but several of the 5 officers have taken law enforcement positions in a nearby community that offers better pay

and benefits. The Chief resigned first to explore other career options. The civilian clerk also has left.

In recent years other small communities found themselves with no staffing for their police department including Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, Blandford, Massachusetts, Fairland, Oklahoma, and others. The precarious viability of small-town law enforcement is evident, and not being helped by the wave of retirements and resignations across the country.

Working with fewer than the number of officers needed for 24-hour coverage – a condition most American’s can’t imagine – requires some contingency planning. Having an officer on call is one common approach. Although it might add precious minutes to the response time, most officers who are on call can compete with their firefighter colleagues in the skill of getting dressed and out the door quickly.

Other agencies use part-time personnel to fill out their shifts. There are often willing retired officers or trained reserves who will voluntarily or for an hourly rate fill the schedule gaps and be available for public events requiring a beefed-up police presence. Depending on other agencies through mutual aid requests or service contracts is another method. Walsenburg, Colorado voted to eliminate their police department and turn over all equipment and their annual budget to the Huerfano County Sheriff to provide police services.

Small town politics can certainly add to the fragility of policing where loyalties and expectations of special treatment tax the ethics of police leaders. Maintaining

competitive wages and benefits is a challenge, as well as keeping up-to-date equipment that is increasingly necessary to maintain modern police operations. Despite the quality of life arguments in favor of working in a small town where individual officers can establish relationships and make a real difference, that warm feeling doesn't butter anyone's bread.

Putting a further squeeze on small agencies is – you guessed it – anti-police sentiment that has resulted in increased unfunded mandates and policies hostile to police efficiency. Reducing opportunities for federal assistance with equipment, removing qualified immunity, and increasing liability are all very practical reasons to stop being a cop. Colorado is mandating body cameras for every uniformed police officer. Although the legislation promises to fund acquisition of the cameras, the mandate will exist whether the dollars are there or not. Bodycam use, while supported by most police, is expensive long term because of eventual replacement and upgrades needed, but mostly the cost of storing video evidence and sorting through video in response to requests from defense attorneys.

If small agencies disappear, the defunding movement will claim small victories every time. Citizens who call 911 to find out nobody is coming soon will suffer. It is not likely that federal grant money will be available to supplement the daily needs of small agencies. But there will be funding for training in how to be nice and respect people's feelings. No comfort to the lone officer driving a patrol unit with 200,000 miles on it.

## The Message to Police: Let it Burn

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It's the oldest debate of our democracy: when does a citizen's behavior merit government control? When it comes to protests and gatherings the Constitution clearly protects speech and the freedom to assemble. With that right comes the responsibility to do so peacefully, or if the intention is to engage in civil disobedience then to expect the consequence of arrest.

The balance between a peaceful protest, an unlawful assembly, and a riot seems to have been lost in recent years. Law enforcement has often been the object of protests while being sworn to protect the protesters and the public. Observers wonder why law enforcement has been aggressively restrained while rioting lawbreakers have been untouched in the wake of vandalism, assault, arson, looting, and inciting to riot.

During preparation for the 2008 Democratic Convention in Denver, Colorado I felt compelled to respond to a complaint registered in the Denver Post that police were being provided with riot gear and military-grade equipment. The writer's contention, reflecting a common opinion of those who don't understand the dynamics and risks of public mass disorder, was that the appearance of police in riot gear would actually provoke and cause riots. My response was that firefighters in bunker gear don't start fires and medical professionals in white coats don't cause disease.

While reporting from the scene of the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson in August of 2014, I noticed that officers stationed in the protest area which was still smoldering from businesses set on fire, were not in any safety gear. The reason? It would be bad public relations. Rather expose the officers to bricks and other assaults than provide them with basic protections.

California, in its continuing effort to cripple law enforcement, is at the time of this writing, about to pass legislation that prohibits the use of K9s for crowd control. Evoking images of the 1960s in Birmingham, Alabama, the proponents don't like the optics of dogs biting humans. San Diego Police Chief David Nisleit opposes the bill. "Our police K-9s are one of our best, if not our best, de-escalation tools. I just want everyone to be aware I understand calls for change in law enforcement, but this is not it," said Nisleit, but logic and data are of no interest to the anti-police powers.

A case in St. Louis resulted in a liability judgment against Metro Police officers. Officers gave warnings as they monitored an unruly crowd that had begun damaging property. The crowd was then maneuvered into a smaller space where arrests were made, a practice labeled as "kettling". Whether the legal merits of the case are strong or weak (the 8th Federal Circuit of Appeals ruled that it had merit), it takes away a tool that law enforcement has used to isolate and reduce damage and violence.

In Ohio, officials have agreed to stop using pepper spray or tear gas on peaceful protestors. There are exceptions, but only after an act of violence has been

committed. The definition of “peaceful” is an important one, and, as with the kettling case, somebody has to get hurt before the police can act.

During the 2020 riots in Portland, Oregon, which I traveled to cover, the courts prohibited Portland Police from videotaping or live-streaming protestors. Apparently, an attempt to maintain peace by surveilling the crowd for agitators and criminal activity was too invasive. The order didn’t apply to anyone else, and journalists and “legal observers” were exempted not only from videoing activity but given an exception to orders to disperse. Wave your press pass or digital camera and you get special privileges.

And, by the way, don’t use flash-bang distraction devices or pepper spray balls in case somebody who happened to be standing by an agitator with a urine or bleach-filled balloon or bottle, fireworks (commercial grade), or bottle of frozen water being heaved at officers might get a whiff of discomfort (or a piece of a \$250,000 settlement).

There is no doubt that 1st Amendment Rights must be scrupulously protected, but the right to destroy property and assault law enforcement won’t be found in the Constitution.

## New York Mayor – Elect: Bring Back Stop and Frisk

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The practice of stopping suspicious persons to ask some questions and check them for weapons has never been illegal. It has been practiced in ways that has caused the courts to refine the practice, but not outlaw it. New York's incoming Mayor Eric Adams is a retired NYPD captain, elected on a law-and-order platform that apparently appealed to New York voters fed up with rising crime and liberal catch-and-release enforcement policies.

The origin of the legal ability of government agents to detain citizens is the governing document of the U.S. Constitution. It states: "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized."

These 54 words affirm that searches and seizure may happen, but that they must be reasonable and preferably done by warrant. Subsequent court interpretations recognized that there are situations where taking time to obtain a warrant presents a danger to the public or the officer. Therefore, one of the exclusions to the warrant requirement is an exigent circumstance, such as the reasonable possibility of a crime in progress. A reasonable search and seizure can still exist outside of a warrant.

Cleveland Police Detective Martin McFadden was patrolling in plain clothes in downtown Cleveland at approximately 2:30 in the afternoon of October 31, 1963. His attention was attracted by three men. The experienced detective saw the men pacing back and forth, conferring, and staring into a business in a way that led the detective to believe that a possible robbery was afoot. McFadden stopped the three, including John Terry, asked for identification and patted down their outer clothing, discovering guns in the coat pocket of Terry and one other. Based on finding them in possession of weapons unlawfully they were arrested. They appealed a conviction, claiming their rights were violated by McFadden's search.

The famous case, known as Terry V. Ohio, finally decided in 1966, cemented the right of a police officer to briefly stop a person, briefly question them, and briefly search them for weapons. The case described the experience of the officer and the specific behaviors that led him to conclude that persons were possibly armed, and a crime was imminent.

It is important to note that a stop and frisk, known as a Terry stop, does not authorize random stops or stops based on mere suspicion. Without proper foundation, these stops are unreasonable under the 4th amendment. It has also become clear that using race is not allowed as a factor in determining whether a citizen will be contacted for a Terry stop.

An officer must specifically articulate not only the behavior they believe may be connected with criminal



activity that justifies the temporary detention and questioning, but must also articulate why the officer believes a weapon may be present to extend the stop and questioning to a pat down search for weapons.

Incoming Mayor Eric Adams has said, correctly, that the question should not be whether or not police are allowed to confront suspects; it should be about how officers are trained. Stop, question, and frisk is a necessary tool for police to use to intercede in and prevent criminal activity. In the current climate, officers may be reluctant to engage in self-initiated activity, abiding by the cautious advice of “no contact, no complaint”. With more contacts resulting in non-compliance and resistance because of the anti-police mood embraced by lawbreakers, the potential for a contact escalating into violence is greater than ever. With the proper policy and training, as well as public education and support, officers may be able to confidently return to the active policing they want and need to do.

## Chicago Mayor Faces Her Betrayal of Chicago's Police Officers

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When a police officer is killed it is professional practice to support surviving families and colleagues by the agency's leadership and the jurisdiction's leaders. Whether by genuine compassion or for a photo opportunity, a hospital visit shows some level of concern for a fallen hero. But what happens when an anti-police leader goes to the hospital for show?

When two officers were shot, one fatally and one clinging to life, Mayor Lori Lightfoot arrived on the 7th floor of the hospital where concerned and grieving police officers gathered in support of their fallen officers. Lightfoot stopped to talk to the father of the surviving officer, who is a retired Chicago police officer. Witnesses to that encounter reported that he yelled at the Mayor, blaming her for the violence against the officers. The Mayor listened calmly, she proceeded toward the crowd of officers to speak with them.

They moved away from her, behind a row of chairs, and turned their backs to her. The Mayor was reportedly shaken by the rejection. The only question is why she would have expected anything else after her consistently disastrous public safety policies.

"The police officers' decision to turn their backs on the mayor while waiting with the family on the 7th floor was significant," FOP President John Catanzara told Chicago Sun-times reporter Michael Sneed in an interview. "Turning their backs on the mayor was an

excellent example of how the hundreds of police officers felt waiting outside the hospital,” Catanzara said in Sneed’s August 9th article.

In another expression of officers’ anger at Lightfoot, she was asked not to attend a service dedicated to the slain officer, Ella French, after the officers in French’s unit heard that the Mayor was planning to take part. Chicago police Superintendent David Brown was not very well received by a number of officers, but did attend. Brown cleared the room of all but police officers and spent an hour listening to officer complaints. According to Sneed in an August 11th article in the Sun-Times, the concerns “ranged from how officers feel they get no support, to how the Cook County State’s Attorney’s office charges — or fails to charge — cases, to the department’s new policy on foot pursuits.”

In a public statement, Mayor Lightfoot stated “now is not the time for divisive and toxic rhetoric or reporting. This is a time for us to come together as a city. We have a common enemy and it is the conditions that breed the violence and the manifestations of violence, namely illegal guns, and gangs.”

To those forensic experts in statement analysis, a tool used by investigators to examine a person’s word use to discover hidden motives, meanings, and attempts at deception, the Mayor’s statement could be an interesting insight. Lightfoot’s call for unity is really a call for citizens to ignore her anti-police rhetoric and policies. She subtly implies that anyone criticizing her is “divisive and toxic”. She pleads for favor among journalists in reporting on the attacks on the officers

and her response. Her plea for unity is a typical appeal for silence among her critics, in a tone suggesting that any criticism at this time is an insult to the dead officer and her struggling partner.

In a very interesting phrasing she rails against “conditions” that breed violence, and refers to “manifestations” of violence. This is a passive way of de-personalizing the real problem which is individual criminal activity. Instead of calling offenders to account, she wants to alter “conditions”. It sounds similar to the efforts of the Biden administration to ignore conditions at the border and focus on changing the poverty and corruption in Central and South America. Pie in the sky instead of letting the law work as intended.

Finally, Lightfoot uses the terms “breeding of violence” and “manifestations of violence”, an artful dodge of reality that puts violence in ephemeral terms rather than speaking of criminals terrorizing the citizens and their police officers.

Lightfoot, like many politicized leaders living in their fantasy utopian future of peace, are ignoring the reality of the real fight going on for peace on her streets. The officers who turned their backs to the Mayor perfectly symbolized what she, in fact, has done to her city.

## Politicians Can Make Laws and, in Philadelphia, Can Ignore Them

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There are software programs that can count how many times a writer uses certain words or phrases. Having a writing style is one thing, but boring repetition can signal that the writer is getting stale. So this writer is going to apologize in advance for using the phrase “knee-jerk” so often. Like Philadelphia’s knee-jerk decision to make cops stop enforcing traffic laws.

The phrase comes from that exam with the miniature triangle-headed hammer that doctors use to smack you just below the kneecap to see if everything seems to be connected correctly. The fascinating thing about this reflex test is that the result comes without consciously thinking. The doc hits the spot, the leg kicks out. Of course, the brain is involved, but seemingly only as a spectator. It’s a “no brainer” we might say. And that’s why I refer to so many political decisions as “knee-jerk” – very little brain involvement.

Deep conversations about liberty, regulation of public behavior, and the role of armed government agents should be happening all the time in our society. But no, we short circuit those crucial conversations with quick finger-pointing, emotional decision making, and knee-jerk laws and policies.

What is the point of traffic law in the first place? It’s all about statistics. What is the ratio of damage, death, and injury will we accept to the economic benefit of motor vehicles? When heavy machinery is traveling at speed,

the laws of physics rule. If we put limits on how fast vehicles can go, we mathematically reduce the damage when a collision with an object, person, or other vehicle occurs. Law governing speeds are passed. We note that the laws of physics assure us that no collision will occur between two items traveling at the exact same speed in the exact same direction. Collisions only occur when vehicles are at different speeds or traveling in different directions. So we need a rule that says when some vehicles need to yield to others.

Statistics also show that nighttime is hazardous to motorists' health. While there is 60% less traffic at night, 40% of fatalities happen at night. So, we passed laws that require lights and even added what color they must be in order to help others know whether we're coming, going, or slowing.

Those traffic laws were never attached to a heavy penalty other than laws against impaired driving. It was always about education as much as enforcement. But they are laws, nevertheless. As someone who has visited a third-world country without effective traffic laws and enforcement, this writer can testify to the scariness of never knowing if other cars have brakes or if the single dim light careering around the mountain was a scooter or a bus.

If we establish the necessity and, in fact, life-saving value of traffic regulation, we must then ponder what liberties we motorists must yield in return. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis is perhaps best known for saying, "The right most valued by all civilized men is the right to be left alone." The Supreme Court has also held

that the expectation of privacy in a vehicle is lower than elsewhere. The Court has also held that a traffic violation, including equipment deficiencies, is a legitimate reason for a traffic stop.

One of the balancing factors between being left alone and being pulled over for a traffic violation is that a professional police officer is the one empowered to make that decision. That doesn't mean that that is the only model for traffic safety, but with the high accountability of police officers in terms of judicial review, body-worn cameras, and requirements for recording racial information to monitor for disproportionate bias, law enforcement officers have been the best resource for traffic safety. Not to mention that criminals drive cars with weapons and contraband, drivers operate without financial protection for other motorists, some drive while intoxicated, and others flee crimes and hold children captive.

Proposals like Philadelphia's order for police to stop enforcing traffic laws (sure, it's the law, but we're not going to enforce it) and instituting an unarmed traffic enforcement unit that is wholly unaccountable to law enforcement or courts, reporting instead to the Office of Transportation, Infrastructure and Sustainability are a threat to public safety.

It pays to remember a very Marx Brothers or Three Stooges type comedic skit where the doc gets no immediate reaction to the reflex test, then turns away from the patient as a delayed response results in a kick in the rear to the surprised doctor. The lesson is to

beware of the knee jerk because it can kick your butt.  
Bend over, Philly.



## The Toxic Relationship Between Woke Politicians and Criminals

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The counselors who deal with defective and toxic relationships recognize the lack of balance and mutual respect. The criminal justice system, under the guise of reform and personified by “woke” prosecutors, politicians, academics, and even some police chiefs is in a toxic relationship with offenders, playing to role of doormat to the offender. An internet search for “signs of a toxic relationship” reveals some characteristics of those trying to make peace with the criminal elements. Manhattan district attorney Alvin Bragg isn’t the only weak-willed prosecutor in the country, but he is the poster child of a doormat politician. Here are some signs that these doormat politicians are in an abusive relationship with the criminal element.

**They always find something wrong with you.** The doormat tries to placate the offender, thinking that will change things. But it is never enough. Remove bail requirements? Not enough. Make everything a misdemeanor? Not enough. Stop cops from contacting you? Nope, not good enough.

**They strip away your self-esteem.** Standing for something with a unique identity, proudly upholding law and order doesn’t demand respect in the criminal mind. It creates contempt. In repeated attempts to move away from the core identity of being the people’s advocate for public safety, the doormat gives up their own identity for the offender.

**They're controlling and there's a clear imbalance of power.** The doormat is not allowed to be in charge and make important decisions. The offender will guilt trip the doormat and accuse them of not respecting them.

**You keep waiting/hoping for them to change.** The doormat thinks "It's not you, it's me". I'm not good enough, I don't try hard enough. If I do just one more thing for them, they'll change! I'll treat you better, I promise!

**Your offender never takes responsibility.** The criminal mind is not inclined to self-reflection. The doormat might, on occasion, suggest that maybe – just maybe, the offender contributed to their own mess. And that's when the offender reminds the doormat of all of their mistakes. Don't you dare judge me!

**Your family and friends are concerned.** Despite good advice from people who can see the destructive relationship, the doormat remains in denial. You're exaggerating. You just don't understand. You don't know him/her like I do. We just need more time. Meanwhile, things get more and more out of control

**They like to play games.** Offenders are master manipulators. They've been playing the game for a long time, whether it's with social workers, partners, counselors, or probation officers. They know how to elicit sympathy, manufacture creative excuses, and blame other people and their own hard-luck stories.

**You feel like you do all the work in your relationship.** The doormat goes the extra mile. They make the

appointments. They lower the expectations. They make the compromises. The offender does not feel an obligation to carry the weight of their reformation. They are happy to let the doormat plod away trying to change the offender's life for the better, but the offender's life is just fine and only made easier by all of the doormat's compromises.

**They show dishonesty and disrespect.** The offender makes excuses for non-compliance with outright lies. There is no concern in the criminal mind for the sacrifices and inconveniences of the doormat. The sacred status of courts, criminal process, and law enforcement hold no status to the offender. They are just obstacles to dodge.

We feel sorry for the manipulated doormat. We watch them try and try and still be subject to disrespect and outright abuse. We see the offender taking advantage of the doormat instead of accepting the breaks they are given to become a better citizen. The main difference between watching a loved one in a destructive relationship with a toxic person and watching members of the criminal justice system in a destructive relationship with the criminal element is that we the people are the true victims who can't walk away. Maybe Bragg and his ilk need therapy to regain their sense of identity and purpose.

## Portland Should Be Ashamed of Itself

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Admittedly, the smoke from wildfires was enough to sour my visit to Portland, Oregon. I would have been distressed anyway. Portland is a mess. In a democracy, short of a natural disaster, when a city is a mess the ultimate persons responsible are the voters.

As good citizens ponder the future of quality law enforcement in America, responsible studies on ensuring community oriented law enforcement that is fair and equitable are underway. Police executives, legislators, and concerned citizens can be found working together to solve problems and maintain public safety. This is how democracy works when it works well.

Dissent is a part of democracy as well. Protestation and seeking redress of grievance were as important to the founders as the freedom to hold sacred religious beliefs without fear or compulsion. American history is peppered with marches and rebellions from the dissatisfied, disenfranchised, and determined. But there has never been a more powerful voice than the vote, and this apparently is where Portland has failed to hold its leaders accountable.

When Portland Police Bureau crowd liaison Lt. Jeff Niiya engaged in text exchanges with one of the protest leaders - exactly the kind of relationship that his assignment entailed - he was accused by Portland politicians of misconduct. City Commissioners JoAnn Hardesty and Chloe Eudaly blasted the texts. The mayor called the texts “disturbing” and said they crossed the

boundaries of acceptable police work. Niiya was exonerated by PPB Chief Outlaw after an investigation. Mayor Wheeler, under Portland's unwieldy city governance system, also acts as Police Commissioner.

Wheeler has been notoriously unsupportive and critical of PPB. Police associations have filed grievances against Wheeler for derogatory, hostile, and damaging remarks and actions. The city has reduced the PPB budget by \$15 million dollars. This will eliminate traffic enforcement units, officers assigned to schools, and officers assigned to transit. The city is already understaffed based on other cities' police staffing.

Mayoral candidate Sarah Iannarone has also shown contempt for Portland's front line police officers, blanketly accused the Portland Police of "waste and violence the Portland Police Bureau inflicts on our community" in her campaign statements, along with calls for diverting PPB's funding to pay for other services while criticizing officers for rising crime rates and traffic deaths. After a clearly justified shooting of a knife wielding man who refused efforts by officers to talk with him after they had initially retreated. Iannarone tweeted "'I've not seen evidence the deceased was carrying a weapon. I have seen evidence the officer who killed him has no problem wielding his."

Portland's Commission system of government is ill-suited to long term planning. One officer I spoke with has served under four chiefs of police in under 4 years. With the Mayor the defacto Police Commissioner, police leadership is inevitably tenuous and politically charged. Every election is an opportunity to change

direction with no stability ensured to maintain any given course over time.

Despite the number of officers who have retired, those remaining are courageously continuing to serve under immense strain. The retirements were anticipated and cannot necessarily be attributed to the current, virulent anti-police actions of politicians and extremists. Anarchists have always had a presence and influence in Portland, so their activity is not unexpected. Affirmation and support of Portland's everyday citizens is not absent either. But officers have been forbidden to use tear gas for riot control, forbidden from live streaming protests, and have not been provided with body cams since results of those have not lived up to the expectations of the anti-police crowd and are now being touted as invasive to citizen privacy.

Watching a stolen car travel speedily away with a no pursuit policy, watching calls stack up for long response times, and knowing that officers simply can't afford the time to do proactive safety stops or interdiction made me want to weep for the citizenry and its police officers. Seeing the estimated 14,000 homeless going without services, but whose occasions of lawlessness must go unattended, reflects a national problem but simply cannot be blamed on the PPB budget or police action against them. Having to step over men sleeping on the sidewalk and having to dodge an angry man pounding the walls with his fists in order to get a meal at Denny's should not have to happen to me, or the angry man, or the man hugging the street sign using the sidewalk as his bed.

I could not have more respect for the officers of the Portland Police Bureau. Portland's citizens, the vast majority of whom recognize the need for healthy, quality policing, are the only answer to the problems plaguing and destroying a magnificent city. It takes courageous candidates for public office and active voters to turn around this lost city. It can be done. But for now, shame on Portland.

## Purging Police Executives of Color a Key Crisis Point

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Racial diversity in police hiring has increased dramatically in the last generation of policing, including the ranks of police leadership. While the progress has yet to generally equal the diversity of the population served by their law enforcement agencies, key roles are more frequently being filled by women and minorities. This should be a cause for celebration but many minority chiefs have been lost in the calls for police reform amid charges of systemic racism in policing.

An undercurrent fueling the current antipolice movement is critical race theory. What was once the subject of ivory tower academic discourse has reached into mainstream thinking. The theory, at its core, views society through the lens of race with the underlying presumption that white supremacy and privilege are pervasive and racist. One apparent response to the perceived illegitimacy of white run institutions and culture would be to see people of color rise to prominence and influence in society and the economy. Ironically recent weeks has seen the toppling of women and people of color from police leadership when those persons would appear to be key to police reform.

**Chief U. René Hall**, Chief of Police in Dallas, Texas is a black woman who heads one of the nations ten largest police departments. Whether current political pressures associated with allegations of police abuse impacted her decision to resign by the end of 2020, Dallas was not immune to controversy. Off duty officer



Amber Guyger was convicted in 2018 of killing Botham Jean, a black man in his own apartment. Guyger reported that she thought Jean was in her apartment in the same apartment complex when in uniform and arriving home after her shift. Crime rates in Dallas were also rising under Hall's tenure. A mass arrest of racial justice protestors also generated controversy.

**Rochester, NY, police chief La'Ron Singletary** announced his unexpected retirement in wake of the in custody death of Daniel Prude in March of this year. Although that death occurred before the George Floyd in custody death during an arrest by Minneapolis police, Prude's case only recently became public.

**Carmen Best, the first Black woman to lead the Seattle Police Department** tendered her resignation in August of this year after the city council reduced her budget by nearly 4 million dollars, including reducing her salary, and eliminating 100 officers. Best was poised to preside over one of the nation's most ambitious police reform efforts in the wake of massive civil disruption in that city. After the slashing of her budget and the vindictive appearance of cutting her salary, Best said "I'm done - can't do it".

**Steve Anderson, the chief of the Metro Nashville Police Department** is not black but Deputy Chief John Drake is. With Nashville's own protest challenges it will be interesting if Drake's influence will sustain his likely step into the chief's chair. Another black police leader stepping into the top post is Milwaukee's acting Chief of Police Michael Brunson, Sr after the demotion of **Milwaukee Police Chief Alfonso Morales**, a Latino.

Questions about police use of teargas on protestors dogged Morales as well as dissatisfaction with his response to questions from Police Commission members about discipline and investigations. Latino **Deputy Chief of Administrative Support Services Miguel Dominguez** is serving as Acting Chief in Las Cruces New Mexico after Police Chief Patrick Gallagher came under criticism for eight arrestee deaths occurring under his two year tenure of this town of under 100,000 population.

As efforts continue to recruit candidates who reflect their community, the absence of role models who reflect racial and gender diversity is a setback to a core aspect of police reform. That these leaders are leaving their prominent areas of influence at a time when racial imbalance is a core issue of the day.

## The Wicked Flee

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There is a biblical proverb among the words chiseled in the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C.: “The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion.”

One might not expect a Bible verse to be the rationale for a proven law enforcement strategy, but there it is. Criminal actors may seem bold, but they inevitably act when they think they will not be identified or be held accountable. A recent daytime jewelry store theft saw \$5 million worth of jewelry snatched from a window display by five masked robbers with hammers before anyone had a chance to pursue them. Brazen, yes, but brave, no. Criminals are cowards who do not want to get caught. They are jittery and paranoid. Many are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs to numb their nerves and whatever conscience they may have.

So, what is the greatest crime prevention strategy? Eyes. Witnesses. Guardians. Police officers on the beat can be the most effective eyes of all. Polls show that an increasing number of citizens oppose defunding police agencies and favor the increased presence of police in their own neighborhoods.

In Seattle, where crime rates have dramatically spiked in the rush to crush police activity with burdensome restrictions by state law, reduced funding, on top of reduced retention of experienced officers, Mayor Bruce Harrell is supporting “new” police strategies. Harrell said that compared to 2020, last year saw aggravated

assaults increase 24%, shootings and shots fired incidents increased 42% to an all-time high and violent crimes increased an overall 20%, hitting the highest level in 24 years.

The city is using targeted enforcement efforts (read that to mean more cops) in areas with especially pervasive and violent crime. Yes, it appears that despite the anti-police rhetoric of the past few years, one big answer to crime might – just maybe – be more police officers present to prevent crime. There’s nothing more discouraging to the cowardly criminal than badges nearby. Foot patrol and bicycle patrol, where feasible, keep officers in a smaller area that keeps criminals guessing. Officers in patrol cars can be preventive, but most crooks know that once one car goes by, another may be hours from patrolling that block again.

It may have taken two deadly shootings and a collection of violent crimes to get the Mayor’s attention to an area known locally as The Blade along Third street between Pike and Pine streets. Open-air drug sales and vendors with suspected stolen goods were active in the Little Saigon International District. Patrons and business owners are relieved by the presence of both uniformed officers and undercover operatives. Groups of people openly using fentanyl on the street corners leaving tin foil from their paraphernalia are gone now.

Business owners and residents, often from at-risk communities of color, are happy to see the officers present and the results of crime falling dramatically where these efforts are being made. Otherwise, businesses are increasingly relying on contract private

security services to fill the gap and provide more eyes scanning for criminal actors. While residents applaud Seattle's efforts, some say it comes too little too late as some business has collapsed under the weight of robberies, burglaries, property damage, and intimidation of customers. Others wonder how long the concentrated effort can be sustained by the police department and whether the effort will bring long-lasting results. But for now, the badges are a welcome sight.

New York City police are returning to paying attention to so-called "quality of life" crimes. That strategy was widely credited with reducing the city's crime tolls under Mayor Giuliani and police leaders Bernard Kerik and William Bratton. Paying attention to littering, alcohol use in public, and other misdemeanor offenses create more citizen-police contacts. Whether enforcement actions take place or not, the interactions can result in gaining valuable community information, arrests on warrants, and the criminals' sense of being under observation.

To keep the wicked fleeing, police need to be supported in their efforts at being present where needed. That means not only the appropriate staffing and funding levels but both public and prosecutorial support for the contacts and arrests that result.

## About The Author

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This series is authored by [Chief Joel F. Shults, Ed.D.](#) Joel is a retired police chief. He is an award-winning writer, college professor, trainer, and first responder chaplain.