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COMMUNITY POLICING CLE

I. Presenters

- A. Robert Ramsey, Esquire
- B. Robert A. Del Sordo, Esquire

II. Robert A. Del Sordo - Background

- A. Successful Politician
- B. Successful Attorney
- C. Adjunct at Camden County College
- D. Part-time lecturer at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

III. What is community policing?

- A. Most people think community policing is strictly a police matter, which is not at all true. Community policing is a whole way of life that deals with the interaction between police and the general public.
- B. Community policing fosters a working partnership among police officers and community members because it facilitates communication between law enforcement agencies and the communities that they serve.
- C. Community policing provides police with ready access to witnesses and information regarding ongoing crimes because people are more likely to speak to the police when their relationship is not adversarial.

IV. City of Camden and Gloucester Township Police Departments

- A. The City of Camden had to completely revamp its police department because the relationship between the officers and the community was so bad.
- B. Camden decided to follow the model of the Gloucester Township Police Department.
- C. The result was the Camden County Police Department, which has officers on bikes and in parks, a Citizen's Police Academy, open public meetings, and community involvement that makes people feel that they are a part of the police department.
- D. Officers treat people with courtesy and respect.
- E. The crime rate in Camden has gone down 60% as a result of community policing. The decrease is across the board from homicides, aggravated assaults, and robberies to car thefts.

V. School Resource Officers are an important part of community policing because they establish relationships with students that foster an exchange of information. For example, kids are more

likely to disclose being a victim of sexual abuse or share information about drug dealing if they have a relationship with the officer and do not think of him or her as a stranger or adversary.

VI. Legal Issues

A. Citizens often provide uncorroborated and hearsay information. The police must find corroboration because they cannot act on the word of a citizen with whom they have no proven track record.

B. Anonymous informant information must also be corroborated. For example, if the person provides information that three men in a particular vehicle will be leaving Camden to pick up drugs at a specific location and time and will bring the contraband to another location to store for later sales, the police will need to corroborate the descriptions of the men and their vehicle, the route they took, the timing of the trip, etc., to establish sufficient reasonable suspicion for an investigative stop or probable cause to search for contraband.

C. Undocumented residents should be able to report a crime without the fear of being deported.

1. Federalism/Republican Form of Government – State and local law enforcement officers are not tasked with enforcing federal laws, nor are federal agents obligated to enforce State and local laws. *See Arizona v. United States*, 567 U.S. 387 (2012).

2. Do local police have the obligation to at least notify federal authorities of people unlawfully in the country?

VII. Financial Issues

A. The City of Camden has no tax base or business base to support a police department. With a county police department, the entire county supports the department even though its primary mission is to police the city.

B. Same theory as funding a county jail. The entire county funds the jail even if the majority of inmates are from one municipality.

VIII. Why hasn't community policing caught on in places like Trenton, Patterson, and Passaic?

A. Local governments do not want to give up control.

B. The mayor wants to be able to pick up the phone and call his/her police chief.

IX. Realities of Politics

A. Politics sometimes stand in the way of county police departments, mergers of departments, and shared services.

B. Where does impetus to encourage community policing come from?

1. It must come from the citizens themselves.
2. Citizens will encourage community policing if progressive police chiefs listen to them and promote police/community relations.

X. Community policing saves lives and money.

XI. Understanding of Police Services

A. Citizens really have no conception of the array of services that police departments are required to provide to the public.

B. Citizen Police Academies are there to educate people in this regard.

XII. Defunding is Really “Reimagining”

A. Defunding the police doesn’t mean taking funds away from the police.

B. Defunding means reallocating funds in an effort to reimagine public safety. An example of this would be to divert funds from purchasing an assault vehicle to pay for mental health training for police officers so that they know how to communicate with certain arrestees

XIII. Less than Lethal Weaponry for Police

A. Less than lethal weaponry is the first element of the community policing theory.

B. Use restraint before force.

C. Lethal force is always the last resort.

XIV. Mr. Del Sordo’s Predictions for the Future of Community Policing

A. Community policing, which is already being taught in police academies, is the policing of the future.

B. Young officers are college graduates who are more accepting of the practice.

C. Community policing will be generally accepted within five to ten years.

D. If the people want community policing, politicians must make it happen.