

06/24/20

Representative Kevin Coach Christie

Testimony before Joint House Government Operations & Judiciary Committees On S.219 & S119

Allies, Friends and Colleagues,

Please take a moment to review the attached links.

When we look to shift a paradigm, education, and training across disciplines, throughout my career we have always spoken to utilizing “Best Practice.” “Best Practices” are the cornerstone of continuous improvement. Another concept to be applied is “we don’t have to reinvent the wheel.” This brings us to the results of my research and observations—a high-quality, research-based policing system that embodies our aspirations: The 21st Century Policing Task Force construct. In addition, we are challenged in our legislative mandate to assure quality, transparency, and accountability. The tool that is used across disciplines and institutions is accreditation. The crown jewel of law enforcement accreditation is CALEA, the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

The Pillars of 21st Century Policing are: Building Trust and Legitimacy, Policy and Oversight, Technology and Social Media, Community Policing and Crime Reduction, Training and Education, and Officer Safety and Wellness.

Five Ways Stakeholder Groups Can Implement the Task Force’s Recommendations:

Local government:

1. Create listening opportunities with the community.
2. Allocate government resources to implementation.
3. Conduct community surveys on attitudes toward policing, and publish the results.
4. Define the terms of civilian oversight to meet the community’s needs.
5. Recognize and address holistically the root causes of crime.

Law enforcement:

1. Review and update policies, training, and data collection on use of force, and engage community members and police labor unions in the process.
2. Increase transparency of data, policies, and procedures.
3. Call on the POST Commission to implement all levels of training.
4. Examine hiring practices and ways to involve the community in recruiting.
5. Ensure officers have access to the tools they need to keep them safe.

Communities

1. Engage with local law enforcement; participate in meetings, surveys, and other activities.
2. Participate in problem-solving efforts to reduce crime and improve quality of life.
3. Work with local law enforcement to ensure crime-reducing resources and tactics are being deployed that mitigate unintended consequences.
4. Call on state legislators to ensure that the legal framework does not impede accountability for law enforcement.

5. Review school policies and practices, and advocate for early intervention strategies that minimize involvement of youth in the criminal justice system.

POST Commission (Peace Officer Standards and Training)

The CALEA Accreditation programs provide public safety agencies with an opportunity to voluntarily meet an established set of professional standards, which require:

1. Comprehensive and uniform written directives that clearly define authority, performance, and responsibilities.
2. Reports and analyses to make fact-based and informed management decisions.
3. Preparedness to address natural or man-made critical incidents.
4. Community relationship-building and maintenance Independent review by subject matter experts.
5. Continuous pursuit of excellence through annual reviews and other assessment measures.

1) https://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/04-2016/plliars_of_21st_century.asp

2) <https://www.calea.org/what-accreditation>

3) <https://www.theiacp.org/sites/default/files/all/i-IACP%20GMU%20Evidence%20Assessment%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

“Omnibus Law Enforcement Reform Bill”

All Law Enforcement Agencies and Entities.

*** **Voices** of affected populations Black, Brown and Marginalized Vermonters in **all steps of our process, from planning to oversight**

*** Additional Oversight by HRC Recommendation by Racial Disparities in Criminal and Juvenal Justice System Advisory Council

*** Act 54 Act related to Racial Disparities in Criminal and Juvenal Justice System Advisory Council – amend to include additional oversight by adding Racial Equity Executive Director to the Council

*** Use of Force – define “**Necessary**” and require consistency across all Law Enforcement (Include sections #3, #4, #5 of Bor Yang Testimony to Senate Judiciary) (Wilda, Bor and Kiah)

*** H.478 Establishing a task force to study and consider a State apology and proposal for **reparations** for the institution of slavery.

*** Act 9 Racial Equity Executive Director – amend to add the original language, that was dropped from the bill – that the Executive Director of Racial Equity will have subpoena power to aide in the work of mitigating systemic Racism in ALL of state Government.

*** **Pledge** in August to add 2 FTE’s (a Data Analyst and a Policy Analyst) to the Office of Racial Equity. **(H.937)**

*** **Pledge** in August to add Body Cameras, with community access for **all** Vermont Law Enforcement Agencies

*** Move Training Council to DSP with Legislative over-site combined with Government Operations and Judiciary

*** In addition to adopting "The Pillars of 21st Century Policing" we will adopt **ACCREDITATION**. It is required in statute across many institutions: Education, Healthcare and Human Services, including Providers and Facilities. Of our Institutions, which one does not? Law Enforcement. Through *****CALEA**, (The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies), we could require accreditation. There are levels of accreditation. Self-study preparation is the time span for doing the work of compliance. We would give a time frame to complete the self study in order to not lose certifications. To allow for all size agencies there are levels of accreditation within the CALEA process. Based on the work required we would allow five years to be engaged and on track for completion of self study, which is verifiable. We did this in Title 16 with regard to Tech Centers 24 years ago, in one act.

*** Accreditation for Communications entities (CALEA)

Two questions: 1. Would you send your child or family member to a non accredited school?
2. Would you send your family member or go yourself to a non accredited hospital?

Lastly: *** Of the 70+ Law Enforcement Agencies in the State only 2 are Accredited, VSP and UVM(both working to higher levels) and 1 in Self Study, Hartford PD & Hartford Communications (in final stages).

*** As we watch National News we notice Law Enforcement Agencies using military tactics and approaches to policing **with**, Helmets, Shields, Long Rifles and Tear Gas. Then we see Law Enforcement **without** Helmets, Shields, Long Rifles, Tear Gas and walking arm & arm and Taking a knee with protesters. The thesis is 21st Century Policing vs. Traditional policing.

This is within our reach!

Thank you all. Be well and stay safe my Allies, Friends and Colleagues.

Kevin Coach Christie

Member, House Judiciary
Co-chair, Social Equity Caucus
Chair, VT Human Rights Commission
Member, Hiring Panel Hartford PD
Chair, Hartford School District

- 1) 21st Century Policing Task Force
- 2) CALEA Accreditation
- 3) George Mason University Study