AT PERF’S TOWN HALL MEETING IN CHICAGO ON October 23, participants spent more than an hour discussing current issues regarding gun crime, as well as strategies for influencing national, state, and local legislation on firearms issues. Following are excerpts from that discussion:

PERF PRESIDENT AND PHILADELPHIA COMMISSIONER CHUCK RAMSEY:
Concealed-Carry Reciprocity Is a Threat

In September I went to Washington to testify before the House Crime Subcommittee against H.R. 822, the National Right-to-Carry Reciprocity Act. This bill requires every state to honor every other state’s permits for carrying concealed, loaded guns. We’re arguing not against concealed-carry laws, but rather that the states should decide for themselves whether they want to enter into an agreement with another state to recognize each other’s permits.

For example, we have situations in which people who have been denied a concealed-carry permit in Pennsylvania can get a permit in Florida, even though they don’t live in Florida. Then they carry firearms in Pennsylvania.

This makes no sense to me. I don’t think it’s appropriate for the federal government to get involved in this way, because concealed-carry laws vary too greatly from state to state. Some states have pretty good requirements, with background checks and training requirements. Other states are very, very lax.

This federal legislation has absolutely nothing behind it; there’s no provision for establishing a national database. So if one of my cops stops at guy at 1 in the morning who has a concealed carry license from Utah, we have no way of knowing whether that’s a valid license. If one state wants to enter into an agreement with another state, that’s fine. But it should not be a case where the federal government says you have to do this with all other states, regardless of whether another state’s law is compatible with the laws in your jurisdiction.

I’m told they have as many cosponsors as they need for passage of H.R. 822 in the House, so it’s going to pass the House. [Editor’s note: The bill did pass the House 272 to 154 on November 16.] Hopefully we can block it in the Senate, but if it goes to the floor of the Senate, it’s probably going to pass there too.

Unfortunately, arguments about regulating guns get nowhere in Congress. We just keep

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hitting our heads against a concrete wall. The NRA lobbyists have got a hold on these guys in Congress, to be honest with you. I don’t think we can give up the fight to have some reasonable regulations on firearms, but we’ve got to broaden our argument. We can’t sit around waiting for a solution from Congress, because I guarantee you, it ain’t coming. [applause]

MILWAUKEE CHIEF ED FLYNN:
A State Legislator Told Me to “Check with the NRA”

Until recently, Wisconsin was one of the only two states that did not have a law allowing for concealed carry of firearms. But the legislature was moving to change that, so when the Democrats were in charge of the legislature, I tried to advocate for a gun law that could help us: making a felony of carrying a weapon illegally.

The problem was that Wisconsin had the worst of both worlds. People are allowed to openly carry firearms, and while they weren’t allowed to carry a concealed firearm, no matter how many times a person was arrested with a concealed firearm, it was a misdemeanor. The only way it could be a felony was if you were already a convicted felon and had a firearm.

Our 20-year average for homicides in Milwaukee before I got there was 115 per year. So not having a concealed carry law wasn’t helping me on the streets of Milwaukee. My only consolation was that Chicago’s murder rate was higher—and Illinois is the other state without a concealed carry law.

In January the Republicans took over both houses of the legislature and the Governorship, and they rammed through a law allowing concealed carry. I can tell you that the law was dictated by the NRA. That may sound like hyperbole, but here’s why I say that. While this was going on, I was trying to lobby to get the criminal penalty increased to a felony level if you carried a firearm illegally. That’s our problem—bad guys with guns. So I called up the committee that was running the bill, and asked, “Can you do this?” And I was told, “Can’t do it, the NRA doesn’t like that. But here’s the phone number of their lobbyist. If it’s OK with him, it’s OK with us.”

So I called the NRA lobbyist in Washington. I said, “Hello, I’m the police chief in Milwaukee. Could you please let my legislature make carrying a gun illegally a felony?” And I explained that about 55 percent of my homicide arrestees had prior arrests for carrying a concealed weapon. And yet under the current law, 42 percent of my homicide suspects actually qualified for a gun permit at the time of the homicide, because illegally carrying a firearm was a misdemeanor unless you already had a felony conviction.

In my previous jobs in Massachusetts and New Jersey, I almost never had a problem with crimes being committed by people who had permits to carry a firearm. Permit-holders were not the people who were robbing banks or shooting people randomly in the streets. But in Wisconsin, even offenders who had repeatedly been convicted of illegally carrying a concealed firearm could get gun permits.

So here I am, asking the NRA lobbyist, “Would you please let my legislature forbid career criminals from getting firearms permits?” He said, “I’m sorry, we have a strongly-held position on this, that only felons should be denied permits.”

Having gone through that meat grinder, the point I want to make is that we, as a profession, need to move past the Brady years. Frankly, I am tired of losing. I would like us to start espousing legislation concerning firearms that’s derived from our statistics. We’re the only country in the world that has a Constitutional amendment regarding firearms. We’ve got to realize that it’s a fervently held position among some very influential people that this is an extraordinarily important right. We have been getting sucked into this ongoing culture war. And in a culture war, nobody ever wins, because it’s not about facts, it’s about beliefs, and you can’t out-argue a belief. It’s a dogma, a reflex. So why fight those battles? If someone in North Dakota wants an assault rifle, what difference does it make? We’re not going to win that one.

We all have our data, and it tells us that the overwhelming majority of our dead bodies are career criminals who were killed by other career criminals. So what kind of legislation do we need to affect that homicide number? We need laws increasing the penalties against armed criminals. Those 10 percent of bad guys who commit 50 percent of our crimes have to go to jail. And I think we’ve got to make room for gun offenders in our prisons by getting away from putting minor drug offenders in prison.

Baltimore Commissioner Fred Bealefeld:
We Need to Focus on Holding Violent Offenders Accountable

We represent some of the major cities in America, but there are thousands of small police agencies with very divergent views within their own communities. We wore ourselves out in Annapolis for years trying to get a reporting requirement for stolen handguns.

But I think we can get everyone to agree that what we should be doing collectively is focusing on violent offenders in our communities. We need to devise a collective national trap that intercepts these bad guys with guns in every way possible. I think we get caught in these debates about issues like high-capacity magazines and assault weapon bans, but we need to stay focused on the prize, and that is capturing these violent offenders, holding them accountable for their actions, and identifying some best practices in the country to get that done.

One more point: We’re only talking about the tip of the spear of the problem. Police chiefs are going to keep talking about how to catch bad guys committing gun crimes. But in Baltimore, right now I’ve got 12-year-old kids who are boosting cars, and when they go in the glove box and find a gun, they become part of my problem. And they’re part of a larger problem, which is the cultural violence in this country that perpetuates this fixation with handguns. That’s a problem out of the control of the people in this room, but it’s something that’s going to have to be dealt with.

St. Louis Chief Dan Isom:
We Can Achieve Results with Existing Laws

Many major cities and smaller cities are experiencing these same problems related to guns. The NRA is a powerful force, and I had
FROM THE COPS OFFICE:
Community Policing—We Have an Opportunity for You
Introducing the Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool (CP-SAT)

The value of community policing is widely acknowledged by the field as a successful strategy in addressing crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. Through building partnerships and solving problems, law enforcement agencies are able to proactively concentrate on issues that have previously required extensive time and resources and have consistently created problems and concern for community members.

Despite the widely recognized importance of community policing practices, police administrators have struggled with practically defining what community policing means within their respective organizations and local contexts. As a result, it has been particularly challenging for chiefs to determine the status of community policing implementation within their organizations. This has created a situation in which the full adoption of community policing is rare, even where many agencies claim to have put it into practice throughout their organizations.

Police agencies are often faced with documenting their “successes” in community policing-related activities or other organizational change efforts to government executives, funders, or community stakeholders. Standard organizational performance measures such as crime and response rates are essential elements for strategy development and evaluation. However, they need to be complemented with an appreciation for changes in department strategy in such areas as general engagement with the community, priority placed on community policing strategy at all levels, and perceptions of organizational transparency.

To address these issues, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (the COPS Office) partnered with ICF International and the Police Executive Research Forum to develop a practical tool for agencies to measure the extent to which they have implemented community policing principles within their organizations. Community policing experts and practitioners were brought together to build and test the Community Policing Self-Assessment Tool (CP-SAT). The CP-SAT has been successfully tested and validated in dozens of police departments to ensure it is both scientifically valid and user-friendly for police agencies of all sizes and jurisdictions.

The CP-SAT allows agencies to identify the strengths and gaps in their community policing implementation in three critical areas:

1. **Community Partnerships**: The quantity and quality of collaborative partnerships between the police agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problems and increase trust in the police.

2. **Problem Solving**: The degree to which the agency is engaged in the systematic examination of identified problems to develop effective responses that are evaluated rigorously.

3. **Organizational Transformation**: The alignment of organizational management, structure, personnel, and information systems to support community partnerships and proactive problem-solving.

What is unique about the CP-SAT is that it is completed by sworn staff at all levels, civilian staff who work on community partnerships and/or problem solving, and representatives from community partners who are knowledgeable about the agency and how it interacts with partners. In addition to items common to all respondents, some questions have also been tailored for different agency stakeholder types where relevant. Collecting data from multiple respondent types ensures that police administrators learn the perspective of all relevant stakeholders. ICF staff will work with each respective agency to determine a sufficient response rate across categories.

This all sounds good on paper, but are the challenges of implementing such a large-scale survey too much for police agencies already strained with layoffs and other cutbacks? The answer surprisingly is no. A core ingredient of the evolution of the CP-SAT over the last five years has been ensuring that it is practical and usable, while still providing agencies with the core information required to document their successes. The COPS Office, ICF International, and PERF have developed and validated a shortened version of the original CP-SAT, which takes only 15 minutes for each respondent to fill out. The CP-SAT Original Form is still available for those agencies that wish to use it, but experts and practitioners have ensured that the CP-SAT Short Form maintains integrity to all core elements from the original version.

The CP-SAT is available on a voluntary basis to 2009 COPS Hiring Recovery Program (CHRP) grantees. All CHRP grantees are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to administer the CP-SAT to their agency at no charge. Administration of the CP-SAT Short Form will also be a mandatory requirement as a part of the COPS Hiring Program (CHP) grants for 2011 and beyond. The tool will be available starting February 1, 2012 for all 2011 CHP grantees.

Agencies who are recipients of both a 2009 CHRP grant and a 2011 CHP grant are required to administer the CP-SAT in their agency in 2012 as part of their CHP award. As a recipient of both grants, you have the option of administering the CP-SAT before February 2012 and can also elect to conduct a second round at a later date in a pre-post scenario, if desired.

To successfully implement the CP-SAT, agencies need to prepare an email list of sworn staff at all levels, civilian staff working in community policing-related activities, and other key stakeholders knowledgeable about the agency’s interaction with the community. ICF has created an email invitation with a link to complete...
TOWN HALL DISCUSSION: Differential Police Response and “Resisting the Tyranny of 9-1-1”

AT PERF’s Town Hall Meeting, Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn and Dr. George L. Kelling of Rutgers University discussed their efforts to promote proactive policing strategies, rather than focusing resources on random “preventive patrol” and rapid response to calls for service. Dr. Kelling, who is perhaps best known as co-developer of the “Broken Windows” thesis in policing, is a pioneering researcher on the topic of rapid response. In 1988, he wrote that his research had shown that “rapid response to calls for service … had little impact on arrests, citizen satisfaction with police, or levels of citizen fear.”

Unfortunately, in the view of Chief Flynn and Dr. Kelling, cuts in police budgets are causing some departments to step back from proactive policing and return to the discredited approaches of the 1970s.

Following are excerpts from the Town Hall Meeting discussion:

CHIEF ED FLYNN:
I’m Using Limited-Duty Officers
To Take Action on Priority 4 Calls

Remember the expression, “the tyranny of 9-1-1”? Remember how we, as a profession, changed our approach based on some very good studies indicating that rapid response to calls has no impact on crime?

Before I arrived in Milwaukee in 2008, I was preparing for my new job by reading staff meeting notes, and I saw that Milwaukee was still committing the department to reducing response times by 30 seconds—and reducing crime by only 1 percent per quarter.

When I arrived, I started a conversation in community venues and with my officers about the rapid response research. I spoke about what I call “wholesale policing vs. retail policing.” Retail policing is going to someone’s house and telling the kids to go to bed, because they won’t listen to their parents. [laughter] You’ve heard those calls, right? When I was in Springfield, Massachusetts, I once heard a call in which an officer was being dispatched to “an out-of-control pillow fight.”

I started pushing for wholesale policing in Milwaukee, which means that we put officers in the public spaces to make people feel safe, facilitate informal social controls, and engage in proactive police behaviors. But you cannot produce meaningful numbers of foot cops and bike cops to do wholesale policing, or to implement your crime strategies, if the officers are constantly being pulled off those assignments in order to respond to routine calls for service. So we took some very specific steps to solve the problem.

I found that we had 150 officers on some form of limited duty, so I worked with Bob Wasserman to set up something called differential police response. We took these officers, put them in the districts, got them cubicles and phones, and instructed Dispatch to start routing Priority 4 calls to them. These limited-duty officers would call the complainant and see if they could solve their problems on the phone. I wanted Milwaukee residents to call and get a police intervention, even if it wasn’t an in-person intervention.

For example, we found we could handle noise complaints effectively over the phone. You get the address of the noisemaker and call him up. “Hello, this is Officer So and So from the Milwaukee Police Department. Can you turn your radio down? It’s causing a disturbance. Thank you.” Then you call back the complainant and ask, “Has the radio been turned down? Yes? Good, thank you.” Call handled, enter it in the computer.

We handle about 40,000 calls for service now over the phone. And they’re interventions—I’m not talking about just taking reports on the phone.

This works. We have produced meaningful, assertive policing. And the result is that this has freed up time for more productive activity. Our car stops have quintupled in four years. Our field interviews have quadrupled. And here’s the statistic that’s really amazing: Our citizen complaints have declined. I would have hoped that with four times as many field interviews, we might get “only” three times as many complaints, but we’ve had fewer complaints. The point is, we’re visible, we’re clearly in the public spaces, and we’ve seen significant decreases in street crime, the crimes you would expect to be affected by police interventions. A 40-percent reduction in car thefts, a significant reduction in gang-related homicides and shootings.

So I’m thinking this is all-win. We’re using research and we’re doing the right thing. But then I find that a newspaper is working on an “expose” about “delayed police response.”

I sat down with the reporter, gave him a copy of George Kelling’s Kansas City response time study2, gave him George’s writings on the misuse of response time as a police metric. I said, “Look, here is a chart showing response time going slightly up, but the stolen car figures are going down, violent crime is going down, field interviews and car stops are going up. Here’s data, and data, and data!”

But it was to no avail. The story focused on four particular incidents in which we did respond in person but should have

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gotten there faster. And yes, there will always be hot calls that we should have handled better. Sometimes, something goes wrong. But the reporter used four anecdotes to trash the entire structure of my policy.

Our response time to non-emergencies has gone up by 2 minutes, our response to genuine emergencies has gone up by about 13 seconds. But our homicide rate is down by a third! In the view of the newspaper, so what.

So I called George and I called Chuck Wexler to complain about the unfairness of it. And they said, “This is something you should talk about in the community.” But it’s difficult, because we all know it can be risky to implement a new “best practice.” Anything we do that goes against the conventional wisdom is a risk. In government you are safer failing conventionally than taking a risk, even if the risk may produce a real reward and success. Conventional failure is rewarded. I could focus on rapid response, and even if crime went up, people would think, “Well, it’s the economy” or “we don’t have enough officers.” But if we take responsibility for serious crimes, we are fair game.

So now I’ve got to re-explain to the community what we’ve been doing and why. I had been going along thinking everyone was happy because our crime rates are way down, but I violated some conventional wisdom, so now I have to do some explaining.

GEORGE KELLING:

Often, the “First Responders” Are Bystanders, Not the Police

As many of you know, I’ve been on a rant about rapid response that goes back to the 1970s. [laughter] As chiefs today, you have inherited a bad situation, because rapid response was marketed very skillfully for a long period of time. And unfortunately, the concept seems so intuitively reasonable—“Of course if police get there more quickly, it’s going to make a difference.” Debunking that is extraordinarily difficult.

One question I have about rapid response is: Where did we get the idea that when residents call the police, their responsibility is over? How did we get to a point in our society where we think that we’ve met our responsibilities just by calling 911?

Many of you may have seen the video earlier this year of the traffic accident in which a motorcyclist was trapped, unconscious, under a burning car. Police and EMS hadn’t arrived yet, so citizens rushed over and lifted up the car so they could pull the motorcyclist to safety. And it was only then that police and paramedics arrived.

We need to stop promoting the idea that the police will always be the first responders in every situation. Don’t give me this stuff about “citizens shouldn’t take risks.” People should take risks to help their fellow citizens. We believe in Anglo-Saxon traditions that citizens police themselves, with the support of police whom they hire. You all know the phrase—“The police are the public, and the public are the police.” The only difference is that we pay the police to do a job, but the job is still everyone’s responsibility.

I find it troubling when I see stories about budget cuts in police departments, and people say, “We’ve got to return to basic police service.” And what is basic police service? It’s responding to calls. We need to make the case that that’s a placebo. To the extent that you respond to calls for service in situations where you know it doesn’t make any difference, you are wasting a valuable commodity.

We have to de-market 911 and make people understand that 911 is a low-payoff strategy. This doesn’t mean I think the police should never rush to a scene. At times they should rush. But we should not withhold police services, we should not police city streets, in the name of rapid response times. That is a bad idea that unfortunately is intuitively reasonable. So we must be especially clever in developing arguments that will convince the general public that it is not a good idea to send cars constantly, repeatedly, to calls that you know will not make any difference.
the same situation as Ed Flynn did where I tried to get legislation passed in Missouri and had to clear it with the NRA.

So recognizing that, maybe we ought to find some policies that work with the NRA. One of the things that the NRA always says is, “Let’s vigorously enforce the laws that are on the books.” In most jurisdictions we have some prosecutors and judges who seem to want to give offenders multiple breaks. So if we could change our messaging to enforcing the laws that are on the books against the people who are causing violence in our communities, maybe that’s a message that would resonate.

Our federal partners in the DEA, ATF, and FBI are all great partners, and we do have stricter penalties on the federal level. But they cannot handle the volume of all the cases that come through our states and our cities.

**BOSTON COMMISSIONER ED DAVIS:**
**We Should Not Retreat on Past Legislation**

I wouldn’t want to retreat from where we are. I believe that unfortunately, some day there will be a massacre in this country with assault weapons. We have taken the right position on this ethically and logically, and I think that if we step back from it, history will hold us accountable. I thought the shooting incident in Tucson was going to turn the gun issue around somewhat in Congress. But in spite of what Congresswoman Giffords went through, and what the others who were shot went through and the families of the six who were killed, it did not move these people in Washington off the dime. So I think we should move forward, but also maintain our positions on past legislation.

**LOUISVILLE CHIEF ROBERT C. WHITE:**
**The Reality Is that Congress Will Not Approve New Gun Regulations**

[Note: In early December, Chief White began a new position as chief of police in Denver.]

I agree with Ed Davis, but I’m in Kentucky, and in Kentucky a lot of people have guns, and they carry them everywhere. I even know a preacher who advocates bringing guns to church. Kentucky believes in the right to bear arms.

I made a visit to Washington, D.C. to try to persuade one of our congressmen to approve the enhancement of gun registration, but I was told that any effort on that was a waste of time.

**TORONTO CHIEF WILLIAM BLAIR:**
**Canadian Police Chiefs Stood Together To Fight a Rollback of Gun Registration Laws**

Chief Blair, who recently completed a term as President of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, described a national campaign by that organization to stop a rollback of Canada’s firearm registration laws.

We do have gun issues in our municipalities. Seventy percent of all the crime guns that are seized in our country were smuggled in from the United States, so we are very allied to your concerns about gun issues.

But let me contrast our experience to yours. The city of Windsor, Canada, is directly across the river from Detroit. There’s about a quarter-mile of water that separates them, but they’re joined by a tunnel and a bridge. Both cities have experienced the pressures caused by the downturn in the economy. The city of Detroit has had about 285 murders so far this year, which is about their average. The city of Windsor has not had a murder in two years. A quarter of a million people, and not one murder in two years.

There are good people and bad people on both sides of that river. So the difference is clearly guns. In Canada, we have excellent laws on firearms, requiring licensing of all firearms owners, and registration of all firearms—handguns as well as long guns. Police have access to that database, and it’s checked about 14,000 times a day by law enforcement. Police, as they’re going to an address, can determine what guns are registered to the people living in that house. It’s incredibly helpful in law enforcement.

However, the Canadian version of the NRA has been putting pressure on our politicians to change those laws so that we would lose some of the firearm registration powers. The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police took a very strong position, multiplied by every chief in the country, who went out to their communities, to their local media, to their elected officials to talk about our position with respect to guns and retaining those gun registration requirements. The bill was defeated; we retained the gun registry. I’m afraid we may yet lose on this gun legislation if it comes up again, but we demonstrated that we can exert some influence. Every chief of police in every municipality, in the provinces and the federal government, from coast to coast in Canada, we all stood together on this and it did make a difference.

**DETROIT CHIEF RALPH GODBEE:**
**We Need to Go after the Trigger-Pullers**

I think this is not a zero-sum proposition. I agree with Commissioner Davis that we cannot retreat on the philosophical arguments that are right and true. I think we have a moral obligation to law enforcement. But by the same token, I think Chief Flynn is correct, that on gun issues we need to focus on our arguments that are reasonable and measured, that we need to work vigorously to have our voice heard, and we need to go after the trigger-pullers. I think we get our behinds kicked in the argument with the NRA because of the ideology of carrying a weapon and the 2nd Amendment guarantee. But when we go after the people who pull the trigger, that’s when we start to win the argument.
the survey that can be sent to all potential respondents. Over a period of three weeks, reminder emails will be automatically sent out to help increase the response rate. All data is kept confidential; there are no individual identifiers in the data that the agency will receive, and the agency will not be able to link an individual’s data to their email address.

At the end of the process, an automated report is generated that provides a descriptive summary of the agency’s data results in a user-friendly format. Results from the CP-SAT will allow agencies to enhance their community policing efforts through the identification of community policing strengths and areas for improvement. The CP-SAT is intended to be a useful management tool for your agency and will not negatively impact your agency’s grant or future funding opportunities with the COPS Office.

The COPS Office has placed a tremendous amount of importance on the use of this tool. The CP-SAT Short Form is now ready and available to agencies who received a 2009 CHRP grant. Agencies are encouraged to visit http://cops.usdoj.gov/Default.asp?Item=2604 for more information or contact ICF at CPSAT@icfsurveys.com or 877-99-CPSAT (877-992-7728) with any questions.
TOWN HALL MEETING DISCUSSION:
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