

**Testimony of Dr. Cedric Alexander**  
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**Before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee on “War on Police: how the federal**  
**government undermines state and local law enforcement”**  
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Chairman Cruz and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to be here with you today.

My name is Dr. Cedric Alexander, National Immediate Past President of NOBLE, and Deputy Chief Operating Officer for Public Safety, DeKalb County, GA. It is an honor to be here today to participate as a witness in the Senate hearing on the “War on Police: how the federal government undermines state and local law enforcement.” I want to acknowledge and thank Senator Cruz for holding this hearing and inviting me to participate.

I speak to you from the perspective of a person who has over 38 years of law enforcement experience and who has held positions at the highest levels both at the federal, county, and city levels. In addition, I hold a doctorate in clinical psychology.

I have in the past, represented an organization, NOBLE, whose mission is to ensure EQUITY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE in the provision of public service to all communities, and to serve as the conscience of law enforcement by being committed to JUSTICE BY ACTION.

It is my position that this country has the unique opportunity TODAY to address the lack of trust and understanding of law enforcement in many communities. It is imperative to every citizen that we collectively deploy solutions in the areas of training, community policing, and technology to ensure that America is secure both domestically and internationally.

Secondly, through these solutions, we are able to further the hopes and dreams of many of our forefathers in realizing true Civil Rights and Human Rights as stated in the Declaration of Independence: *“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

The recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, Staten Island, New York, and many others cities, when combined with real and/or perceived attacks on civil rights legislation have created an environment where many people feel disenfranchised by their national and local governments.

### **Solutions to Building Bridges of Understanding and Partnership Between Law Enforcement & Communities They Are to Protect & Serve**

#### **Training**

Cultural competency is a critical component to bridging the gap amongst law enforcement and communities of color. It is the foundation for people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds to interact effectively. When developed and implemented as a framework, cultural competency enables systems, agencies, and groups of professionals to function effectively to understand the needs of culturally diverse groups. It is critical that law enforcement reevaluate its training methodologies to ensure that they reflect the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs and incorporate cultural competency training for police officers that is part of the recruit and in-service training.

## **Community Oriented Policing**

It is our recommendation that the law enforcement community adopt community policing as the philosophy of policing in the U.S.

Here are the key components of community policing:

- Community policing allows officers to demonstrate their support for the community. Residents and officers are allies. Officers respect and protect the civil rights of residents. Racial profiling and other forms of discrimination are strictly prohibited.
- Community policing demands that officers interact with people who live or work in neighborhoods that they patrol. Officers are trained to communicate with people, solve community problems and develop an appreciation of cultural and ethnic differences.
- Community policing emphasizes the importance and value of human life. The use of excessive force is absolutely prohibited and deadly force is reserved strictly for when an officer's life or the life of a citizen is at risk.

NOBLE has launched a pilot program entitled "The Law and Your Community" through funding from the Department of Justice – COPS Office. The program's aim is to develop trust and understanding between law enforcement and the community. The Law and Your Community is an interactive training program for

young people ages 13-18 designed to improve their communications with law enforcement officers and their understanding of their federal, state and local laws. Components of the program include:

- Citizenship: What does it mean to be a citizen? What are the laws governing everyday life including traffic laws? What are your rights as a citizen?
- Basic Laws: Understanding the basic laws governing issues such as “stand your ground,” gun ownership, staying safe within your community, and maintaining positive affiliations – including peer relationships, maintaining good grades, adult relationships, and benefits of mentors.
- Law Enforcement Engagement: Educating young people and adults on how to engage and navigate communication with law enforcement officers, what is Community policing? and understanding the realities of working in Law Enforcement.

### **Technology**

We feel that technology can be leveraged to support the effective implementation of community policing and ensure maximum transparency to the public. Through technology, partnerships with communities can be strengthened

in the areas of problem-solving and partnership initiatives. Likewise, there is an important role in applying technology in improving the effectiveness of law enforcement training.

Listed below are technology recommendations:

- Requirement of body cameras for law enforcement officers.
- Deployment of various social media platforms to allow law enforcement departments to better communicate and interact with local residents.
- Use-of-force and firearms training systems.

### **Obama Administration: Advancing Policing vs. War on Policing**

As a 38-year veteran, psychologist, and a conservative senior law enforcement administrator, I would like to discuss this notion on the “war on policing”. I feel this issue deserves further discussion. I’ve had the opportunity to speak to a number of police administrators whom I respect and regard as leaders and none of them have yet to express to me this notion of “war on policing”. Not to minimize the fact there may be a few who feel very different. I am yet to have had that conversation and I travel quite frequently across this country. With the recent police conflict in Baltimore, Maryland involving 25 year-old Freddie Gray and the execution style shooting of two New York Police Department Officers, Wenjian Liu and Rafael Ramos, there was a reported brief work slowdown;

however, officers very quickly turned around and continued to show their dedication and give 100%. The “Ferguson Effect” notion suggests that police officers are lying down, but there is nothing in the science that supports that notion to be widespread. Are law enforcement officers conscious of the increased shootings amongst police officers and community relationships? Yes, they are. Law enforcement officers are being held to a higher standard and are being held accountable. As a firm law and order official, I have yet to see, feel or experience anything that suggests there is a “war on police”. Is it a challenging issue facing America? For some it is; however, most people understand that policing is changing. For example, how we recruit and train officers is going in a new direction. As a seasoned executive law enforcement official, I feel that the Obama Administration, Department of Justice & the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) Office, has done more to encourage positive police interactions with the community through Obama’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Initiative.

### **Experience with the Department of Justice and the Community Oriented Policing Office**

At the request of the Former Police Chief of Tampa Police Department (Tampa, FL) and on behalf of the Department of Justice, I participated on the Community Oriented Policing (COPS) critical site visit, where I will be given an opportunity to

provide an expert objective review of profiling complaints of significant concern in that community. This review will be based on my experience, the evidence placed in front of us and the ability to fairly assess the concerns of both the police officers, who I wholly support, and the entire community who expects nothing but the best from this agency.

I was also requested by the Sheriff of Tompkins County Sheriff's Office, Tompkins, NY, to assess a SWAT incident in which a wanted homeowner barricaded inside his residence, subsequently killing himself. Elected officials and community members had a number of concerns in regards to how local Sheriff/Police responded to the incident. Providing an objective view into these incidents assists the Sheriff's Office and the COPS Office in clarifying questionable and controversial police practices.

By implementing these recommendations on training, community policing and technology, we believe that real progress can be made in improving the relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. This would greatly improve the state of civil rights and human rights in America. I thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.