

Schmidt, Kim

From: Michael Dane <icelander5@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 12:50 AM
To: DOJ: Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability
Subject: Re: Testimony for Commission on Law Enforcement Accountability, Transparency, and Community

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Dear Mr. MacDonald,

I attended the Commission meeting on 6/26/2020 and listened with interest and attention to the entire proceeding.

I was disappointed that members of the public were not afforded a chance to read a statement, as noted on the published agenda (3.d - public testimony),

I would like my comments and questions to reflect the context provided in the presentation, and I submit the following additional statement for publication on the website and introduction into the record.

I will make every effort to attend the July 2nd meeting, and hope to read my statement if given the opportunity to do so..

Thank you for your attention.

Regards,
Michael Dane

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Comments and questions based on the presentation in the hearing 6/22/2020:

My name is Michael Dane, and I am a resident of Stratham, NH.

I appreciate the opportunity to read a statement.

This Commission was formed in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, expressly to deal with the issues of racism and use of force in policing that this event thrust into prominence. If we are not looking hard at how those questions apply to our police here in New Hampshire, we're not doing the job. There is ample evidence that racism is real in New Hampshire. We live in a state where Blacks are approximately 5 times as likely as whites to be incarcerated. I encourage anyone interested to follow the instagram accounts @blackatexeter and @blackatunh created by students who need a safe outlet to share the indignities they regularly face for being Black in New Hampshire. Racism is not something that happens only in other places.

While I am encouraged by the comments of Director Scippa that he sees the need to look outside his organization for expertise in addressing these issues, I was equally discouraged by other testimony showing a

lack of focus on the problem. In the slides presented, I saw far more on the use of force and on weapons training, than on avoidance of force. A 45-minute video on de-escalation is no substitute for the kind of intensive, instructor-led programming and role-playing that is required to help police officers understand how to avoid situations where escalations occur, and how to defuse them. Training is needed that helps police officers understand what they may need to change in themselves, and their patterns of behavior. What would happen if we reversed the training emphasis, and took the resources currently invested in Simunitions training, tazer, OC and other weapons training and moved them into training on force avoidance and de-escalation?

Given the charge of this Commission, I would expect a strong commitment to exposing, measuring and correcting implicit bias, so we must commit to making it mandatory to collect data on race for all police encounters, Failure to do so would show a lack of will to do the kind of real self-examination that is required for change. I ask that the points discussed in the meeting on the 22nd regarding IAPro not collecting this data be carefully reviewed.

I would like to ask whether transfers from other departments are subjected to background checks with regard to misconduct, citizen complaints, implicit bias and use of force. I would like to hear about the complaint process for officer misconduct, and whether it is possible to file anonymously, as well as whether complaints receive any non-police audit or review. I would like to understand whether New Hampshire has considered dispatching unarmed responders to calls where social skills are more applicable than a gun and handcuffs.

I would like to close by suggesting that if the work of this Commission doesn't make everyone involved profoundly uncomfortable, we are doing it wrong. This is our call to action, and not the time to congratulate ourselves on how well we are doing. If it was going well, we wouldn't be here.

Thank you for your time..

On Fri, Jun 26, 2020 at 12:00 AM Michael Dane <icelander5@gmail.com> wrote:

Members of the Commission:

Please find below my statement for the meeting tomorrow, 6/26/2020.

I'm Michael Dane, resident of Stratham, NH. I ask that the New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police issue an amended statement that acknowledges the problem of institutional racism in policing, and makes a commitment to addressing it in clear and specific ways.. The statement suggests that this problem exists in other places, but not in New Hampshire. It's time to look within ourselves to find the casual and implicit racism that results in Blacks being 5 times more likely to be incarcerated than whites - here in New Hampshire. Follow instagram accounts like @blackatexeter and @blackatunh for a window into the daily indignities our youth face just for being Black - here in New Hampshire. We look to our police departments to create true transparency by exposing their statistics on use of force and on all types of encounters, by creating a transparent complaint process for officer misconduct with non-police review, and by dispatching unarmed responders to calls where social skills are more applicable than a gun and handcuffs. Banning the use of dangerous and violent tactics like chokeholds is baseline humanity. Being outraged at the murder of Mr. Floyd is baseline humanity. It's time to go much further and make uncomfortable changes.

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