

**Hearing on Metropolitan Police Department  
Year 2000 Performance**

**United States Senate  
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management,  
Restructuring and the District of Columbia**

**The Honorable George V. Voinovich  
Chairman**



**Charles H. Ramsey  
Chief of Police  
Metropolitan Police Department**

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Mister Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, staff, and distinguished guests – thank you for the opportunity to present testimony this morning, and answer any questions you may have, concerning the Metropolitan Police Department’s performance during the year 2000. As a note to those in the chamber, the text of my prepared remarks is available on our Department’s Web site – [www.mpdc.org](http://www.mpdc.org).

The year 2000 was certainly a year of high-profile events for the Metropolitan Police Department. It was also a year of everyday challenges and quiet, yet significant victories for our Department and for the communities we serve. With the support of this subcommittee and the Congress, as well as Mayor Williams and the DC Council, the Metropolitan Police Department continues to make significant progress toward making the District of Columbia a safer, more attractive and livable city for our residents, workers and visitors alike.

People who look at the MPD’s performance over the past year likely will focus on the major events we handled: preparations for Y2K and the Millennium celebrations; the IMF/World Bank meetings and protests; the Million Mom and Million Family Marches, and planning for the 2001 Presidential Inaugural. These events, along with the dozens of smaller, less publicized demonstrations, present unique challenges to the MPD. Year in and year out, no other municipal police department in the country has to deal with the quantity or complexity of major events that we do. I am very proud of how our members respond to these challenges – in particular, their handling of last April’s IMF/World Bank meetings and the Presidential Inaugural. I truly believe our Department has set a new standard for planning and execution in these types of operations – for ensuring that major events can take place as scheduled, that protesters can lawfully exercise their First Amendment rights, and that public safety can be maintained.

These events, however, are not without costs. Our Department has incurred significant, and sometimes unbudgeted, expenses for major events over the past year, in terms of both overtime and equipment. Recognizing that these events take place in the District of Columbia because this is our Nation’s Capital, Congress has been very supportive in providing some financial reimbursement for our costs. Still, as we look ahead, we can expect more of these events, and the potential for more, and more sophisticated, protesters in our city. During this calendar year alone, the IMF and World Bank will meet twice in the District, in April and again in October. The Metropolitan Police Department will continue to do everything we must do to ensure the public’s safety during these types of events. But the cost remains significant, and we will likely need continued support this year and into the future.

Our Department’s performance over the past year involved much more than handling major events, however. The past year also saw continued reductions in crime, growing public confidence in the

MPD, and, as we build for the future, tremendous growth and development of our community policing strategy. I am extremely proud of our members for their accomplishments in these areas as well.

Our FY2000 Performance Accountability Plan included four goals:

- Put 200 more officers on the street – fighting crime and partnering with the community.
- Achieve a 5 percent reduction in violent crime.
- Achieve a 5 percent reduction in property crime.
- Achieve a 65 percent homicide closure rate.

Detailed information on our performance in each of these areas is included as an attachment to my statement. I considered these to be “stretch goals,” deliberately set high to give our members and the community something to strive for. For example, we set out to achieve a 5 percent reduction in crime, knowing full well that this would have to come on top of significant, often double-digit crime reductions in recent years. We also set a 65 percent homicide closure rate, despite the fact that homicide clearances are falling nationally. While our Department did not meet every goal, I am still pleased with our performance in these and other critical areas over the past year.

Putting more officers on the street was a priority not just of the Police Department, but of the Mayor and the community. We not only met our goal of 200 additional officers, but exceeded it through a combination of increased hiring and more effective deployment. Our Department surpassed our hiring goals during fiscal 2000 – thanks to more effective recruiting, strong interest in our lateral-hiring program, and lower-than-anticipated attrition rates. We ended fiscal year 2000 with just over 3,650 officers, our highest sworn strength in many years. Our strength has dropped by about 100 officers during the current fiscal year, as spending pressures have prevented the District’s Chief Financial Officer from granting us the authority to hire new officers. That freeze has now been lifted, and we will begin hiring next month. Our long-range goal, which is being supported by a \$15 million grant from the federal COPS office, is to rebuild the force to our authorized level of 3,800 officers.

In addition to hiring more sworn officers, we have been creative in how we deploy our personnel – to ensure that we have uniformed personnel on the street when and where they are needed the most. Last year, we implemented a new shift schedule system that increased the number of officers working evenings and weekends, when crime and calls for service are at their highest. We created the Mobile Force, a team of officers working voluntary overtime during the evening shift to target hot spots of crime and disorder. More recently, we established the Narcotics Strike Force, which focuses on open-air drug markets. Using a special \$1 million Congressional appropriation, we were

able to get the Strike Force off the ground and provide it with state-of-the-art equipment and technology. Finally we implemented a “redeployment” initiative in which most officers in specialized units or support assignments now spend one week each month, in uniform, patrolling a Police Service Area (PSA). Redeployment is adding dozens of officers to community patrols across the city five nights a week.

More officers on the street is translating into continued reductions in crime. Reported crime in the District declined for the fifth consecutive year last year – a 4 percent reduction overall, according to preliminary data. This follows a 9.4 percent reduction in 1999. Homicides fell by nearly 2 percent last year, to their lowest level since 1987. Homicides involving juvenile victims – a particular concern in recent years – fell by nearly one-third last year, from 28 to 19. Other violent crimes did increase slightly in 2000, which means we fell short of our 5 percent goal. However, property crimes such as burglary and auto theft declined by more than 5 percent, falling to their lowest levels in decades last year.

Crime is down not only because of more officers on the street, but also because of stronger partnerships between police and community. Over the past year, we continued to enhance our community policing model, focusing on the critical areas of training, problem solving, leadership and accountability.

For example, we expanded our innovative “Partnerships for Problem Solving” training program, which provides residents and their officers with information and techniques on how to work together. To strengthen leadership and accountability, we assigned a lieutenant to head up each PSA, and provided those lieutenants with specialized tools and training on their roles in community policing. We created a new, more efficient system for police officers to access other city services that impact public safety. And we forged new partnerships with social service agencies and other providers to get at some of the underlying causes and conditions that contribute to crime in our city. For example, our Office of Youth Violence Prevention is working with the clergy and other community stakeholders to put in place effective intervention and prevention programs for at-risk youth.

As I noted earlier, the homicide rate in our city continues to drop, which is encouraging. After declining 2 percent last year, homicides are down almost 40 percent so far in 2001. My goal – and this is certainly another “stretch goal” – is to end the year with fewer than 200 homicides for the first time since the mid-1980s. We plan to accomplish this through a combination of focused law enforcement strategies targeting the most violent offenders, as well as intervention and prevention strategies targeting at-risk individuals and behaviors, including drug trafficking and abuse. I see this

short-term goal of fewer than 200 homicides as the next step toward reducing the homicide rate even more dramatically over the next several years.

An equally important goal is to increase our homicide clearance rate. Not just the Metropolitan Police Department, but major city police departments across the country are facing unprecedented challenges when it comes to solving homicides. Whereas 35 years ago, police closed almost 9 out of every 10 murders, that number has dropped to between 60 and 70 percent in recent years. This trend is driven, in part, by the changing nature of homicide itself. Years ago, most homicides involved family members or other people who knew one another. Today, homicides are more likely to involve strangers arguing over drugs, gang territory and the like. This factor, combined with the reluctance of witnesses to come forward and the greater sophistication of some offenders, has led to a decline in homicide clearance rates across the country.

The District of Columbia has been no exception. Our homicide closure rate for the year 2000 was 57 percent, down from 61 percent in 1999 and below our goal of 65 percent. Increasing the clearance rate remains a key goal for our Department, and we are taking a number of steps to meet that goal. These include a new standard operating procedure for homicide investigations; an upgrade of our computerized criminal intelligence system; a new, more rigorous selection process for detectives; enhanced victim and survivor outreach, and expanded training. In the area of training, we are creating a new Criminal Investigators Academy, with the advice and input of London's New Scotland Yard, the world's premier investigative agency. In short, we will do everything we can to improve our ability to investigate and close homicides and other violent crimes. To the victims and survivors of these crimes, we owe nothing less than our very best effort.

I want to briefly touch on other accomplishments over the past year. These were not specifically identified as goals in the year 2000, but they certainly contributed to our success last year.

One of these accomplishments is the dramatic reduction in use of force by members of the MPD. Just over two years ago, following a series of articles in *The Washington Post* and a number of high-profile use-of-force incidents, I asked the U.S. Justice Department to come in and help the MPD analyze – and re-engineer – the entire range of policies, procedures, equipment and training related to use of force. Since then, we have worked very hard internally and with the Justice Department to make dramatic improvements in all of these areas. We are now close to finalizing a memorandum of understanding with DOJ that will endorse the changes we have made and avoid a formal consent decree that other departments have entered into.

Our reforms in this area have been substantial. We totally rewrote our use-of-force policy, introducing a use-of-force continuum that includes verbal commands and less-than-less weaponry.

We equipped and trained our officers with OC spray and new expandable batons known as ASPs. We increased officers' firearms training from 8 to 16 hours a year, and expanded the course to focus on tactics and judgment, not just marksmanship. And to improve investigations and record-keeping, we created a first-ever Force Investigation Team that responds immediately to the scene of all instances in which officers use deadly force.

The results of these and other reforms have been dramatic. Over the last two years, police-involved shootings have declined 78 percent. In 1998, 32 suspects were shot by MPD officers, 12 of them fatally. Last year, 7 suspects were shot by the police, only one fatally. In short, we have gone from being a national embarrassment in the area of use of force to a national model for innovation and effectiveness.

Over the past year, we have also expanded our level of cooperation with the other law enforcement agencies that have jurisdiction in the District. This enhanced level of cooperation was critical during the IMF/World Bank protests and the Inauguration. But cooperation is also taking place on a daily basis, throughout our city.

For example, a law spearheaded by Congresswoman Norton and passed by Congress allows the MPD to enter into cooperative agreements with other agencies, permitting them to extend their jurisdiction and assist the MPD. To date, cooperative agreements have been signed with the Amtrak Police Department and the Zoological Police, with several more in the development stage. These agreements are in addition to MOUs that already exist with the U.S. Capitol Police, the U.S. Park Police and others.

We are also working closely with federal agencies on the critical problems of illegal drugs, guns and arson. The DEA Task Force, for example, has provided us with valuable analysis of drug trends and markets in the District, and the Task Force continues to assist our enforcement efforts. The ATF has provided the MPD with new computer technology that allows our Department to access ATF's Washington Regional Gun Crimes Center in order to trace firearms more quickly and efficiently. We have also exchanged personnel with the ATF and acquired a new arson truck, as we work together on reducing arson crimes in the District. These types of cooperative efforts will be critically important in the future, as we continue to focus on enhancing police presence and reducing crime.

For FY2001 and FY2002, we have made some changes to our system of defining performance goals. Rather than focus on a few, relatively narrow goals, we have broadened our goals and established specific objectives and performance measures within each goal. Detailed information on these specific goals and objectives is also attached. But while our approach to performance accountability has changed slightly, our basic commitments remain the same: to reduce and prevent crime; to hold

offenders accountable; to enhance the public's sense of safety; to use force judiciously and fairly; to ensure customer satisfaction, and to continue developing our organization.

I know this hearing is focusing on year 2000 performance. In closing, I would ask the subcommittee to step back and take a slightly longer view of the progress the Metropolitan Police Department has made. I became chief of the MPD almost three years ago. At that time, many of our facilities were literally falling apart; our equipment was substandard; our computer technology was outdated; our policies and training were spotty (especially on such critical issues as use of force); our recruiting was insufficient and ineffective (we were losing more officers than we were attracting); our community policing strategy covered only the basics. Morale within the Department was low, and community confidence in the police was shaken.

Over the past three years, my management team and I have worked very hard – and quite successfully, I believe – to rebuild this police department. We have rebuilt not only the physical infrastructure; we have also rebuilt the pride of our members and the confidence of the people we serve. The fact that we are concentrating our energy and resources on something as complex as improving our homicide clearance rate – and not on something as basic as equipping our districts with toilet paper or making sure officers attend firearms training – is a sign of how far we have come. The comprehensive rebuilding effort we have undertaken could not have been possible without the support of this subcommittee and the entire Congress. Not just your financial support, but your leadership and assistance on public safety issues in general, have made a tremendous difference to our Department and the residents we serve.

We still have a long way to go to make our city – our Nation's Capital – as safe and livable as it should be. But I am confident that with the continued support of our mayor and District government, the President and Congress, and especially our partners in the community, we can continue to reduce crime and work toward making the MPD a model for community policing in our nation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present this overview and to answer any questions you may have.