AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

S. Hrg. 105–640

"KEEPING THE NATION'S CAPITAL SAFE"

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

JULY 27, 1998

Printed for the use of the Committee on Governmental Affairs

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

50–356 CC WASHINGTON : 1998

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office
U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402

48–113

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

FRED THOMPSON, Tennessee, *Chairman*

WILLIAM V. ROTH, JR., Delaware
TED STEVENS, Alaska
SUSAN M. COLLINS, Maine
SAM BROWNBACK, Kansas
PETE V. DOMENICI, New Mexico
THAD COCHRAN, Mississippi
DON NICKLES, Oklahoma
ARLEN SPECTER, Pennsylvania

JOHN GLENN, Ohio
CARL LEVIN, Michigan
JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, Connecticut
DANIEL K. AKAKA, Hawaii
RICHARD J. DURBIN, Illinois
ROBERT G. TORRICELLI, New Jersey
MAX CLELAND, Georgia

Hannah S. Sistare, *Staff Director and Counsel*
Leonard Weiss, *Minority Staff Director*
Lynn L. Baker, *Chief Clerk*

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

SAM BROWNBACK, Kansas, *Chairman*

WILLIAM V. ROTH, Jr., Delaware
ARLEN SPECTER, Pennsylvania

JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, Connecticut
MAX CLELAND, Georgia

Michael Rubin, *Staff Director*
Laurie Rubenstein, *Minority Staff Director*
Esmeralda Amos, *Chief Clerk*

CONTENTS

	Page
Opening statements:	
Senator Brownback	1

WITNESSES

MONDAY, JULY 27, 1998

Charles H. Ramsey, Chief of Police, Metropolitan Police Department, District of Columbia, accompanied by Terrence Gainer, Executive Assistant Chief of Police, and Mike Fitzgerald, Assistant Chief, Technical Services	3
James F. Foreman, Coordinator, Metro Orange Coalition	12
Kirsten Oldenburg, Editor, Crimemail, D.C. Police Service Area 109	14

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF WITNESSES

Foreman, James F:	
Testimony	12
Prepared statement	44
Oldenburg, Kirsten:	
Testimony	14
Prepared statement	48
Ramsey, Charles H.:	
Testimony	3
Prepared statement	42

APPENDIX

Inspector General's Report of Investigation 98–0205	23

"KEEPING THE NATION'S CAPITAL SAFE"

MONDAY, JULY 27, 1998

U.S. SENATE,
OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT, MANAGEMENT, RESTRUCTURING,
AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SUBCOMMITTEE,
OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 3:01 p.m., in room SD–342, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Sam Brownback, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

Present: Senator Brownback.

OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR BROWNBACK

Senator BROWNBACK. The hearing will come to order.

I want to start this hearing with a tribute to two heroes. In an era when sacrifice to some seems foolish and only a quaint notion of a bygone era to others, Officers Jacob Chestnut and John Gibson sacrificed their lives so that others might live.

They are true heroes of our day, people to emulate, and people to pay tribute to. This grateful Nation will long remember their unflinching response when duty called. What more can a man give than to lay down his life for his brother? And these men gave it all, and for that, we can never thank them or their families enough.

I would ask those that are present, if you would, to join me in a silent prayer for these two heroes.

[Moment of silence.]

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you.

We have an open Capitol to our Nation, and that is as it should be. This is the people's place, where the people's business is conducted. Nearly 18,000 visitors a day pass through this Capitol Building of which we are but the current trustees. We should not keep the people from their place because of the craven acts of one. To do that, it seems to me, would let fear win and faith lose.

We may need to tighten security, but let us not close the Capitol. The matter of the Capitol security is under the jurisdiction of another committee. It is under the jurisdiction of the Rules Committee, and they will be reviewing this matter thoroughly.

Our hearing today is about crime in our Nation's Capital, Washington, DC, of which sadly Friday's shooting was only the latest installment of a bad situation. That, I can, though, note for the record, has been improving, but remains far, far too violent.

The culture of violence and death that we see all too often across our Nation continues to play out in our Nation's Capital. One just

has to ask and stop and think and reflect for a moment when will we change. When will it be different?

I think the only answer we can say to that is when each of us do all we can to change and to orient ourselves much more towards life and towards living and caring and giving and helping.

Tomorrow, I think it is fitting as well and appropriate that we will be giving a further tribute to these two officers that sacrificed so much that it just shocks the Nation and it shocks our conscience. Hopefully, it will shock us to action, too.

The hearing that we are focused on today is about overall crime in the Nation's Capital, and in particular, we want to look at the 911 system.

I would like to welcome everyone here today, especially our new police chief, Charles Ramsey, who has been on the job for some period of time. Chief Ramsey, we are happy to have you here with us today.

I would also like to welcome our two DC residents, Kirsten Oldenburg and James Foreman. I am looking forward to hearing about their efforts to stop the spread of crime in their own neighborhoods.

I certainly believe that close cooperation between law enforcement and local community leaders is absolutely vital if we are to change our Nation and if we are to improve the situation. We cannot just depend on the police alone.

In May, the Subcommittee held a hearing with various DC faith-based charities. We heard from a number of individuals there who have been involved in trying to change the face of the Washington, DC, community, with some success, one person at a time. I believe we need more people like these involved in the lives of their neighbors. The Police Department has a tough enough job as it is without having to protect a passive community.

A stronger bond needs to be built between neighborhood leaders and the police. Crime in the city is not a Police Department problem, as it is not in our Nation. It is the result of a community in need, and any solution needs to start within that community, or for us, within our Nation.

I wanted to call this hearing to take a look at some of the grassroots efforts that are being implemented to fight crime at the neighborhood level and also to examine the recent DC Inspector General's report on the emergency 911 system, of which we will discuss some more here today.

Last month, the District's Inspector General released a report critical of the Metropolitan Police Department's 911 emergency system.[1] Unfortunately, results found that some of the calls were not being returned or were not being answered in a timely fashion. We want to review today, with the Police Chief, what has been taking place to get those corrected so that we can get response in the system quickly.

I believe that it is crucial for communities within DC to develop positive relationships with the Metropolitan Police Department

[1] The Inspector General's Report of Investigation 98–0205 appears in the Appendix on page 23.

built on mutual respect and on confidence. Folks should have a sense of security in a place that they live, work, and do business.

I am aware of some programs that the MPD has established to address this problem, such as the Police Service areas, and I look forward to discussing those.

I also look forward to hearing from the citizens' side and discuss what they are doing in their own communities to aid the police in our Nation's Capital.

With that, I would like to welcome Police Chief Ramsey. If you would care to come up to the table, Police Chief, to begin the testimony here today and to introduce the other gentlemen that are with you.

As I stated at the outset, I welcome you to your position of Police Chief. I know you have been in the job for some period of time. I have also noted that violent crime in our Nation's Capital has gone down substantially, but it is still at far too high of a level, and we see tragic events that happen all around us that just draw that more into sharp focus for us. So I look forward to your testimony here today.

Police Chief Ramsey, thank you for joining us here today.

STATEMENT OF CHARLES H. RAMSEY,[1] CHIEF OF POLICE, METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, ACCOMPANIED BY TERRENCE GAINER, EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT CHIEF OF POLICE, AND MIKE FITZGERALD, ASSISTANT CHIEF, TECHNICAL SERVICES

Mr. RAMSEY. Thank you for inviting me, sir. I have looked forward to being able to spend time now talking about a couple of very critical issues.

Before I get started, though, I would also like to thank you for the comments you just made regarding the two officers that recently lost their lives last Friday. They are indeed heroes. On behalf of the entire Metropolitan Police Department, I would like to extend my condolences to the families of both officers.

We were there Friday during that scene. It was a very tragic situation that took place, but, again, it does point out the fact that day in and day out, men and women across this country do put themselves in jeopardy in order to see to it that the rest of society can remain safe. It is incidents like this that heighten that awareness of the sacrifices that are made on a regular basis. So thank you very much for those words. I am sure it means an awful lot to not just the families of those officers, but to law enforcement families throughout the country, it means a lot.

Senator BROWNBACK. I thank you for what you do and what you symbolize and represent in the police, and those that keep us safe.

Mr. RAMSEY. I would like to introduce two people that are here with me. Terrence Gainer is the Executive Assistant Chief of Police. He has been with us now for 2 months. He is my second-in-command. He was formerly the director of the Illinois State Police for about 8 years, and agreed to come with me here to Washington.

I have Mike Fitzgerald on my right, who is the Assistant Chief in charge of Technical Services. Technical Services is the bureau

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Ramsey appears in the Appendix on page 42.

that covers the 911 system. The Communications Section is in his bureau.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good.

Mr. RAMSEY. So he will be able to answer some of the more technical questions that you may have about this system and how it functions.

I have prepared written testimony, sir, which has been submitted in advance.

Senator BROWNBACK. I would prefer if you approve not to read from that, but rather to just let that stand and cut to the chase and really get into the heart of the matter because you raised some very important issues.

I agree with you wholeheartedly that the 911 system is something that we need to pay close attention to. It is a lifeline, if you will, not only for citizens, but for our officers as well. I think Friday's events points out the need to be able to get people on the scene of an event very quickly.

Mr. RAMSEY. Fortunately, that was one incident where responses was quick. As a result of that quick response, we were able to detain witnesses to that particular crime, get emergency response there in the form of ambulances and so forth, and I think that that kind of thing is something that is not only expected. You should demand that from us that you have a system that works. When you call 911, you should have a reasonable expectation that the police will come, and come very, very quickly.

Unfortunately, that has not always been our history here, and Inspector Prettyman's report highlighted that. I would like to just give you a glimpse of some of the things since that report came out that we are doing right now in order to try to correct some of those problems.

The long-term solution to the problem is a new center, and I will talk about that later because the one we currently have is really not adequate enough to handle the volume of calls that come into our department. We handle almost 2 million calls for service annually, and that is quite a few calls for service. And we need a system that can handle that.

But just very quickly, let me just address a couple of the findings that Inspector Prettyman had in his report, and let you know where we are at right now in terms of trying to deal with that.

The first finding, it dealt with our inability to answer emergency calls within 5 seconds and non-emergency calls within 12 seconds. Those are considered to be national standards in terms of response.

The report found that of the 250,000 calls that they took a look at during the first 5 months of 1998, we had only responded in under 8 seconds to about 167,000 of those calls. I asked at the time whether or not any of those calls were answered under 5 seconds, and I was told that they were unable to really give us an exact count of the numbers of calls answered under 5 seconds. So we do not know how many of that 167,000 was actually within the accepted time frame, but it still points out to a problem that we are not getting to the calls for service quick enough.

One of the reasons why, as pointed out in a report, was a staffing issue. Since that report has come out, what I have done is I have assigned 20 limited-duty police officers to the Communications Sec-

tion, to shore up personnel there. They bring with them a great deal of experience in knowing what is required in terms of answering calls for service, dispatching calls to units in the field. These are people that, because of injuries and other types of reasons, are unable to perform in a full-duty capacity. So we did not take people off the street in order to do this.

We utilized limited-duty personnel throughout the Department in order to help us with some of the administrative tasks that need to be done in the Department, and we have detailed 20 people to the Communications Center. Now, that is spread out across all three shifts. That is not 20 working at any one time. That is spread out across the three shifts, but that has added to our personnel.

When needed, overtime is approved if we need that in order to fully staff our positions. Full staffing for us would be 15 call-takers and 11 dispatchers. That would be full staffing.

Because of the high rate of absenteeism in the Communications Section, which is a problem that we have been working on—my understanding, for several years now, we have had a problem with sick leave abuse in that particular unit—this has helped tremendously in that.

We have posted vacancy announcements for 26 positions that are currently vacant in the Communications Section, and we have posted those positions for hire. And our Personnel Office is working toward trying to bring in civilians that can make up the staffing so that we do not have to keep those officers there for any extended period of time because there are other functions, and some of them will be returning to full duty, quite frankly, at some future point in time if it is a health-related type of injury, if that is why they are limited duty.

Another thing that came out in the study was the fact that our dispatchers are paid at a rate that is substantially below our neighboring jurisdictions. We have proposed legislation to upgrade the wages for those individuals assigned as call-takers and dispatchers. It is currently pending before the Council for the District of Columbia for their approval.

I think that is very important because one of the reasons why we have difficulty in maintaining staffing levels is because people, once they learn those jobs, leave us and go to other jurisdictions because they can make substantially more money doing the same thing. So it makes it very difficult to keep people in those positions when you are not competitive salary-wise, and we are taking steps to try to deal with that.

We are also looking at training that can enhance employee performance. I do not think we do nearly enough in this organization as it relates to training; in particular, training of our civilian personnel. That is a very vital role in the Department. Everything begins there at the 911 Center.

We need to have better training for our personnel so that once they do respond and answer calls, they are capable of being able to deal with any emergency that they may be faced with at that particular moment.

I realize that we have problems with our 911 Center, but I also do not want to overlook the fact that thousands of calls come into that Center on a daily basis, and a vast majority of them are han-

dled efficiently and professionally. And the men and women that perform that task day in and day out—and it is an incredibly stressful job—deserve some credit for the positive things they do, but, again, that is not to say that there is not room for improvement because there is room for improvement. And the Inspector General's report certainly points that out.

His second finding, which I touched on briefly, dealt with the fact that there seems to be an abuse of sick leave which is one reason why we cannot maintain staffing. I will get into that in just a little more detail for you now.

The director of Communications Division is closely monitoring the use of sick leave, looking for abuse patterns with particular employees, and we will take corrective action against those people who are abusing the medical-roll system that we have in place within the Metropolitan Police Department, but a lot of the reasons, I think, why people tend to go on the medical roll rather than report to work is really because of stress-related types of illnesses.

One of the things that we have done is we have contacted Dr. Beverly Anderson, who is the administrator of our Employee Assistance Program, to come up with a comprehensive stress management program. We have to find ways not only in the 911 Center, but I think policing in general. Very little has been done internally in most departments to really help police officers and other members of the Department effectively deal with the stress associated with their jobs. It is very difficult to be in a position where every time the phone rings, someone's life could very well hang in the balance. That is an incredibly stressful situation to be in, day in and day out.

We do not do a good job in helping people manage that. The long hours that they have to work—I do not know if you have ever seen our Communications Center. I would be glad to show it to you, but it is certainly not a place that you would like to spend a great deal of time in. It is an old facility. It was not really designed with a lot of the more modern thinking that we currently have relative to environment and the way people function in those environments and how to help, you know, have lounge areas where people can get away from the stress and be able to relax and so forth. It is a very confined space, but we are working with Dr. Anderson to put together a good stress management program for our personnel, and also working with the Renaissance Clinic Counseling Center that is also participating in that.

The last finding, one that I take some exception to, but I do understand and agree somewhat that perhaps there is validity to this, and that is that we are not responding in a timely phased fashion to the scene of emergency and non-emergency requests for assistance. That basically was the result of their reviewing 300 citizen complaints that came in during 1997 relative to slow response on the part of the police.

I think that when you stop and consider that almost 2 million calls for service came across that system, to pick out 300 and draw that kind of conclusion is a bit unfair, but I think that there is room for improvement there, and let me tell you a couple of things we are doing in order to deal more effectively with that.

We had a practice in the past, when people called 911, the dispatchers would not give them a time frame in which they could expect the police to arrive. They would simply just say, "We will send the police."

Well, if you tell me you are going to send the police, I immediately go to the window, start looking outside, do not want to miss them. I want to make sure I am there when they arrive. If they come an hour later, usually you would be upset about something like that.

If you have a situation that the police are being dispatched, but it is not of an emergency nature, a Code–1 type of call, where our immediate response is needed because the person has been injured, an offender is on the scene, what have you, or there to take a report for something that is not considered to be a priority one, oftentimes there is a delay in dispatching. We now have changed our policy where if we know that it is going to be because of the volume of work that is taking place that particular night under that particular PSA or in that district, we give people a realistic time frame. If it is going to be an hour, we will tell them it will be about an hour before the unit arrives. That makes it easier for people in a lot of ways because I think that some of the complaints we have, we can avoid by simply just communicating better to them how long it is going to take.

As far as the Code 1, priority-one types of calls for service, once that call is given to the officer, the response time is pretty much within the time frames that exist in other departments. It obviously depends on how close you are at the time the call comes out, but our response once the call is actually given out to the units in the field is really pretty good for Code–1 types of assignments.

With the new PSA model—and I know you want to talk about the PSAs—there was, again, another policy change that was not effectively communicated to the public, and that is that because we are trying to maintain beat integrity and we are trying to have officers from the particular PSAs respond to as many calls on their individual PSAs as possible, that means that in many cases, some calls are stacked so that that officer can respond personally to those particular calls. It gets back to what I said earlier about not giving accurate information to people about when they can expect to actually see the police.

In the past, the first available unit would be dispatched regardless of the call, but what that does is it breaks down beat integrity because now that officer that was assigned to patrol a particular PSA is pulled off that PSA to answer a call and another PSA and so forth, and it is kind of a domino effect when you start to lose beat integrity. Once you have lost it, it takes a long time to recover.

So we try to categorize calls based on their priority, and the need for us to get there very, very quickly. Our problem has been in the past that we simply did not communicate that very effectively.

One last thing about response time that kind of indirectly feeds into that is getting more active in marketing our non-emergency number, 727–1010. Eventually, we would like to go toward 311, which is being used in Baltimore, and we are studying that now to really take a look at the feasibility of having a 311 system here in the District, but the more calls for service that could get off of

our 911 system, the better off we all are. And people need to understand when it is appropriate to call 911 and when it is really better for them to call 311. Save those phone lines so when that call comes in, because we can handle up to 15 calls simultaneously. Otherwise, people get a recording and are asked to wait on the line, but if you have got a true emergency, you do not need to be waiting on the line. Of those 15 calls, I would be willing to bet you that at any given time, 6 or 7 of them are probably calls that should be on the non-emergency system.

So that is something that we have to really pay a lot of attention to, really market. We asked the community to help us with that, so not to use 911 inappropriately. So, when people call and really do need help, we are in the best position possible to be able to provide that assistance to them.

Just real quickly on our PSAs, since you had asked about PSAs, we are now 1 year into that new policing strategy, a community-oriented policing strategy that really brings beat integrity back in vogue.

Years ago, you had the old foot policeman and you had the beat cops that knew very well everything that was going on in their areas of responsibility. Back in the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's, we just lost that in most jurisdictions. We got very incident-driven. Police officers pulled further and further away from the community, and beat integrity became something that was a thing of the past.

Community policing brings all that back in place. We can work with community. We can form effective partnerships.

I went to a meeting earlier today for the Alliance of Concerned Men that are very active in Benning Terrace, and prior to their involvement, Benning Terrace was an area that averaged seven or eight homicides per year. In the last year now, they have had one homicide in that 1-year period, and that is because the police, the community, the residents really began working together and having an effect on gang violence. And we need to extend that to the rest of the District of Columbia.

We have been enjoying a decrease of crime. As of today's date, we have a 19-percent decline in part-one offense over last year. We are about 45 homicides below last year's total. So we are seeing changes in crime for the better, but there is still far too much crime that is taking place in the District of Columbia, and until we are at a level where homicides fall into single digits, in my opinion—in fact, there is no need to have any homicides because one is too many for the family that has to deal with the grief and the anguish of having lost a loved one.

We have a long way to go to really get crime where it ought to be to make our city the safest city in the country, which it ought to be as our Nation's Capital, but we are moving in a positive direction as it relates to crime.

I would be glad to answer any specific questions that you might have. I apologize if I kind of rambled on a little bit too long, but I wanted to give you an idea of where we are now and what we are trying to do to correct some of those issues that Inspector General Prettyman pointed out in his report.

Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. I thank you for that, Mr. Ramsey.

I was just sitting here listening to it, and your comments—to me, I was just sitting here thinking how thankful I am that you are willing to do your job, and the officers on either side of you are as well. We never say thank you enough, and we pull people up here in front of these committees all the time and say, well, why don't you do this and why don't you do that. Thank God, you are willing to do what you do, and that you are out on the streets and your officers are on the streets protecting people.

I know on Friday, there was a slain police officer that was buried. He had been an undercover officer, and we have had a number of those happen in the DC area. And we just never say thanks enough for you and your fellow uniformed officers, men and women that protect us, and the Capitol Hill Police of what they do here as well.

I am struck, though, too, as I sit here, and as I was flying back from Kansas today, we are all tired of the violence and the killing and the death that is taking place. So we hire more police officers, or we build more penitentiaries, or we pass more laws. Are there things we are not doing? Is there something that we can reach out and do more ourselves? Are we trying to do it too collectively and not individually? What is it we are not doing that we are still having so much violence and death in this culture?

Mr. RAMSEY. Sir, I do think that there are things that we are not doing, at least that we are not doing enough.

The focus traditionally had always been on building more prisons and hiring more police officers. My personal feeling is that we have to really look to prevention and intervention and really put resources there as well.

For years—and I am a 30-year veteran in law enforcement, and there was a point in my career where I thought just locking folks up and throwing away the key was the way to solve all our problems, but the longer I was in policing, the more I saw. And do not get me wrong. There are some people who do need to be locked up and the key thrown away, but I think that instead of us just looking at ourselves as being responsible for feeding the criminal justice system, we have an equal responsibility to help starve it. You help starve it by preventing people from going down the wrong path to begin with.

I do not think we do nearly enough to really work with young people, to work with even ex-offenders; that once they have paid their debt to society, helping them assimilate back into society. I think prevention and intervention programs need to be as much as part of what we do as the enforcement side of things, and I do not think we do enough in that area.

Senator BROWNBACK. Are there things you could recommend for the Nation's Capital that we ought to be doing more of in that prevention program area?

Mr. RAMSEY. Well, there are a lot of areas, sir. One is certainly in dealing with young people. We have our Metropolitan Police boys and girls clubs, and, of course, people tend to look at things like athletics as being the solution to all our problems, and that is not what I am talking about. That is part of it, but we also have mentoring that takes place there. We have computer learning centers where kids, underprivileged kids that probably would never

know what it is like to be able to use the Internet if it was not for a place like that where they could really come and use those kinds of facilities.

We depend on donations in order to be able to keep those facilities up. Domestic violence is an area where more can be done on intervention. We know from analyzing that particular type of crime that after the first or second call for service to that location—usually, when you come back, some kind of violence has taken place, either a battery or, in some cases, unfortunately, even a homicide. If social services could be put in at an early-enough time where we are able to intervene, perhaps we could avoid that more serious crime from occurring.

When you have domestic violence, oftentimes you have child abuse, you have elder abuse. I mean, there are a lot of areas, and we know a lot about crime now, where if at the right time intervention strategies took hold, we could maybe do a lot to change what ultimately winds up happening when people wind up committing a more serious crime and actually going to jail as a result of it.

Senator BROWNBACK. Chief, you describe a situation that, really, you have got to have a lot more of us involved. I mean, as people in the community, we have got to be willing to reach out and to find that person that is troubled or in a difficult situation and either get involved in their lives or report it at an earlier phase or try to work with people through some of these organizations. You have talked with them, and I think everything you describe is accurate and good. It is going to take a lot more of each of us doing a lot more than we currently are, even in the busy lives that we have.

Mr. RAMSEY. It does take a collective effort, and a lot of the breakdown is family. I think that the church needs to play a stronger role. Certainly, many of the children come from dysfunctional families or the family members are drug addicts or, what have you, gang members. It is a very complicated problem, but it is really going to take a comprehensive approach with all of us sitting down together figuring out ways to make a difference.

We have a huge role in this as police, and, again, we need to focus on those people that are repeat offenders that are out there causing harm to the public, find them and arrest them. So I am certainly not saying that that is not part of the process, too. It is part of the process, but we also need to have that eye on that next generation and on the future and trying to prevent as much of this as we possibly can. That is going to take the collective efforts of all of us.

When you have folks that are willing to spend their own time, like the orange-hat patrols throughout the city and private service organizations that just—I cannot tell you how much they mean to our being able to get out there and fight crime.

My hat is off to them because these are volunteers. They do not get paid anything, but they are willing to work to make their neighborhoods safer, and that is what it takes.

Senator BROWNBACK. I want to get Mr. Fitzgerald here because the topic of the hearing, as we had said some time back, was to look at the 911 system.

You have heard the police chief testify, and you have seen his response. Are we going to be able to get ahead of the problem there that had been identified with 911? What do you think?

Mr. FITZGERALD. Yes, I believe we are going to get ahead of it. What we are doing now, instead of what we have done in the past, just as with the communities, the Police Department no longer works in a vacuum, the same way with the technology efforts. We are looking at integrating our systems not only with the Police Department, but with the Fire Department, to have that centralized communications center, also looking at having our systems connected directly to the Internet and reference the information to be passed down.

There is a lot of things we are doing instead of having a quick response in regards to trying to fix it, and we still have a long-term problem. We are looking at not only long term, we are looking at short term, plus long term, and I assure you that basically within the near future, this problem would correct it.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good. Well, that is what we need to have is a system that does work in a timely fashion so that people can feel comfortable in it.

Chief, just one other question. Do you have programs dealing with gangs? What are you doing to try to stop some of that crime from spreading?

Gangs, as we have heard several people testify, form the family nucleus for too many troubled young people. Are there things we are trying to do to integrate them back into their own families or into a good family situation?

Mr. RAMSEY. Yes, sir. In fact, one program called GREAT is a program that we are implementing through the schools. It is a program that is used in other cities. It is much like DARE, where kids at a young age are taught about the dangers of gangs, because, again, part of the strategy is dealing with current gang members, but the other part is the up-front prevention to keep the youngest members from becoming gang members in the future.

As far as current gang members, working with the Alliance of Concerned Men, the group I referred to earlier, they do extensive work with current gang members, trying to turn their lives around.

Now, it becomes far more difficult when you are talking about the more hardened gang members. Some of them, we need to be able to really just focus on and just remove them from society because they have gone beyond the point where prevention is really going to make a difference. In that case, we are working with probation and parole, where we are really trying to identify some of those hard-core gang members, look at their conditions of probation or conditions of parole, and really monitor them and see to it that they are adhering to those conditions and do not get back out here and commit other crimes.

So those hardened individuals that want to continually create havoc in our communities, we are monitoring them as well, but on the prevention side, working with the schools, working with churches, working with other groups, trying to reach young people and give them alternatives to gangs is something that we are very actively involved in. Again, we could do more, but we are involved in that.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thanks for doing that. If anybody is watching or listening to this hearing and wants to get involved in somebody else's life and help turn it around, they can feel free to contact, I am sure, your office or mine, and we will put them with whatever organization or person to reach out.

I am just convinced myself and thankful that we have folks like you that do put the uniform on and protect us all, but the rest of us are going to have to just get involved a lot more if we are going to turn this overall situation around.

Thank you very much for being here with us today and for your testimony and for your work as police chief. I look forward to that day, too, when we do not have any homicides. We are a long way from it today, although the trends are moving in the right direction on violent crime, and we can hope those keep going the same way.

Mr. RAMSEY. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and, again, I look forward to working with you. You have been a big supporter of law enforcement in the past, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

Senator BROWNBACK. We will keep doing it. God bless you all.

Our second panel is James F. Foreman, Coordinator of the Orange Hats Patrol, and Kirsten Oldenburg. She is the Editor of the Crimemail. It is an online crime newsletter to citizens groups that are helping out in the DC crime situation.

Thank you both very much for joining us. We appreciate your volunteer work that you do and appreciate your being willing to come here today.

Mr. Foreman, welcome to you first, and we would be happy to receive your testimony. Did you want to give it orally or in writing?

STATEMENT OF JAMES F. FOREMAN,[1] COORDINATOR, METRO ORANGE COALITION

Mr. FOREMAN. Yes, sir. I would much rather—good evening. Glad to be here. I am always glad to come on the Hill. That is for sure. Perhaps something will be done because I made a trip to the Hill.

My name is James Foreman. I represent a group called Metro Orange Coalition. It is made up of people throughout the community, throughout the neighborhoods, everyday people, from every walk of life, from every nationality and every religious group, and political group, too.

We have a membership in the Metropolitan Washington Area of over 17,000 people, still growing. We are located in 34 different States in the Nation now, and still growing.

The organization started in the year of 1986, and it started because of a drug problem we were having in the neighborhood that I lived in.

We had an open-air drug market that was running rampant in the community. It was growing bigger and bigger every month. Nothing and no one was doing anything about it.

So a couple of fellows and a couple of young ladies in the community got together and decided that we had to do something about it. So we did. Over a period of time, we did. We got rid of that par-

[1] The prepared statement of Mr. Foreman entitled "Metro Orange Coalition, Where Caring People Meet," appears in the Appendix on page 44.

ticular open-air drug market, wiped it down. It was some of the baddest guys in the world, some of the most heavily armed guys in the world, and they were perceived to be that way by everybody within the community, but nevertheless they fell.

From that point on, other communities called trying to find out exactly what they could do to get rid of their problem. So, in return, we went over and helped this group here, there, and pretty soon, we are doing it all over the city.

At our peak, we had 334 different groups in the Metropolitan Washington Area made up of men and women and mostly female. As a matter of fact, it was made up of 86-percent female and only a very few fellows, really. Some of our groups were made up of 100-percent female, but they were very effective. They got the job done, and they made it work.

When we started, we had a Police Department that was ready and willing to become a part of what we were doing. After they found out what we were doing, they were willing to be a part of it. After they found out that we were not a vigilante group that was willing to come out and by any means necessary take the streets back, after they were found we were not about that, they came out and became a part of.

Collectively, together with the Metropolitan Police Department, the people that live within those community, within the city, DC National Guard, FBI, Park Police, and the Metro Police Department—collectively, we together made it happen in this town.

Open-air drug markets since 1995 do not exist in this town any longer. It is hard-pressed to find an open-air drug market in this town. I think the last one, the FBI knocked off down in the Southwest a few months ago. Other than that, open-air drug markets do not exist in this town anymore.

Drugs are being sold. There is no question about that. Drug-related crimes still occur. There is no question about that, but the people who live in those communities made doubly sure that open-air drug markets fell. They came out trying to save their children, grandchildren, and the children of the communities. They made a concerted effort to do something to solve the problem with those communities.

These are people, working-class people, professional people, retirees—everybody pitched in, made it happen, made it work.

It was 4 or 5 years ago, we had a change in the Metropolitan Police Department. We had a police chief that made it very difficult to operate within town. We had a police chief that made it so that we had more trouble with the Police Department than we had with the crooks on the street. No question about it.

The chief was very unwilling to work with the citizens of the city. He did not work with the citizens of the city. By him not doing what he should have done, it passed around to his own senior officers, and they likewise fell away, but, nevertheless, the people in those communities did not stop doing what they were doing. But quite often, we had no help at all in a situation from the Metropolitan Police Department. If we needed help, we had to call the Park Police. We had to call the Metro Police. We had to call the FBI to assist and help us on the streets.

It got so that we stopped calling the Metropolitan Police Department at all because we were not receiving services from the Metropolitan Police Department. This was the largest volunteer group in the city, and they turned their backs on the group and the city, but, nevertheless, we never turned out backs on the Metropolitan Police Department because a lot of the individual officers that worked the beats, they rode the beats, they in return—they still offered their service, irregardless of what they were instructed by their superiors. They, nevertheless, offered their service to the community, and they kept it going and they are still doing it.

The Metropolitan Police Department today—the leadership of the Police Department today, I do not know. Again, I do not know him. The chief of police, I met for the first time today here. His assistant, I met for the first time today here. I do not know him. I do not know any of them really.

I called a couple of times to request a meeting with them, but I have not had an opportunity as of yet to meet with the chief of police or the hierarchy of the Metropolitan Police Department, hoping that some day soon, we probably will.

Senator BROWNBACK. Well, hopefully, we will crack through that for you here.

Mr. FOREMAN. That is right, no question about it, but, nevertheless, though, irregardless of whether we meet with them or not, we are still not going to stop working the street because those are our communities, our children, our homes, and our businesses within those communities. So we must keep it going.

We found out one thing, that people can make it work. People are the key ingredients to making it work, and without the people that live in those communities being involved, it will not work. And the best thing about it, the people who live in those communities will get involved if you show them how to get involved. There is no question about it, and this is exactly what we do.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good. Thank you very much, Mr. Foreman, and that is absolutely right.

For too long, I think we have tried to shove responsibility of things we are responsible for off to somebody else or some other entity. That is why we have paid our taxes, all of which are important, but, nonetheless, we have got to take responsibility and do a lot our selves.

Ms. Oldenburg, thank you for joining us today. I appreciate your being here, and I appreciate your volunteer work that you have done and look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF KIRSTEN OLDENBURG,[1] EDITOR, CRIMEMAIL, DC POLICE SERVICE AREA 109

Ms. OLDENBURG. I did prepare a statement, and I have provided it to your office, but I would like to just provide you with a summary, an oral testimony.

Senator BROWNBACK. Please.

Ms. OLDENBURG. I have been a resident of Capitol Hill for 15 years, and I have been working with the police in my neighborhood for almost a decade. Most of this was under what was then called

[1] The prepared statement of Ms. Oldenburg appears in the Appendix on page 48.

Beat 26, and we were the first organized community group in DC around a police beat. That was mainly due to the efforts of a Sergeant Wally Bradford, who at those days was an anomaly in the Police Department in that he believed in community policing.

Now I volunteer about 10 hours of my time a week to what is called PSA 109. Much of this time is consumed in operating an E-mail crime alert system that I started more than 2 years ago, and we now have over 500 subscribers. I send out a message about once a week, depending on criminal activity in our neighborhood. We also have lively discussions among subscribers of issues of concern.

In addition, I publish a paper newsletter, unfortunately not often enough these days to properly inform the 4,000 households of our PSA of what is happening around them.

We also have a web site where people can go and, for instance, view a map that we produce once a month showing where crime has occurred and what type of crimes have occurred in the PSA. We have several orange-hat patrols. We maintain statistics on the PSA, and we are now trying to put together a court-watch group because one of the problems we have in DC is that the pieces of the criminal justice system are not well linked together. Once an arrest is made, the police hand the case over to the court, and we lose track of what is happening. Often, the police do as well. So we are trying to sort of link those two pieces of the system together.

As you know, a year ago, MPD switched from the beat system to the PSA system, and I really believe that this has caused a major improvement from my perspective on the street. It signaled a major policy shift within the Department toward community policing. It put more officers on the street, and officers who stay in their assigned PSAs. Sergeants now have the authority to make critical resource decisions based on what is happening in the PSA, but I do feel that the PSAs suffer today from a lack of proper leadership, staffing levels, and training to tackle the kind of issues that the PSA model suggested they would.

I think the basic problem is that MPD officers are trained to be reactive, in other words to chase after criminals, rather than proactively work on the problems that foster criminal behavior in the neighborhood.

I also do not think they well understand the long-term coincidences of the actions they take in the community to the community. Right now many of the people in our community, our PSA, do not feel that the officers are making much effort to get to know the community, and, from my perspective, without this community policing just cannot work.

Another issue is that our PSA has proven to be too large and too diverse to support a functioning community organization on the personal level that we were able to do with Beat 26. Our PSA is too large for even those of us who are quite active to get to know or even recognize all of the officers that are assigned to our PSA.

I think that over time and with commitment from MPD and the community that these problems with the PSAs will be solved, but as an operator of an E-mail system that enables the community to discuss issues that bother them, I am most concerned today with the Department's communication and outreach skills. And these af-

fect the way the community is willing to come forward and work cooperatively with the police.

I want to give you a number of examples. In PSA 109, we have a designated block captain on every block, but the police do not use these people as a major conduit of information from them to the community or vice versa.

In PSA 109, as you know, we have the E-mail system. Well, there are three other PSAs on Capitol Hill that also have E-mail systems now. We probably have a combined 1,000 people linked together online. However, police officials rarely voluntarily use this resource as a way to get out information to the community, nor have they set up a system to assure that we get timely information.

The substation on Capitol Hill does provide us with updates on reported crime, but only when Officer Rita Hunt is available. When she is not there, the information flow stops, and as you know, crime does not.

In June, PSA 109 was hit with 28 burglaries, a record for us in the last year and a half. Our PSA sergeant alerted us to this in mid–June. There was an arrest in July, but we know that in July burglaries are continuing. Incoming E-mail messages are starting to reflect a frustration with a lack of information on what the police are doing to handle this problem. People are getting tired of hearing about what they can do to prevent burglaries and want to know what the police are doing.

To me, this is an example of police failure to volunteer information about an issue that they must understand that is of concern to the community, and let me add, we have the district commander, the First District substation captain, our PSA sergeant, and several officers on our E-mail list. So they can read what is of concern on a weekly basis to the community.

Back in April and May, we had a lot of discussion on the E-mail list about the drug activity, drug markets we have in our PSA, and lack of any evidence that police were doing anything about them. Finally, Commander McManus of the First District came forward, and he told us that he had arranged for a drug enhancement unit to operate in our area. And this pleased people immensely. However, all this goodwill has now eroded because 2 months later residents never saw any increased police activity.

The markets are still up and operating, and so this is a case of police who initially did the right thing and responded to the community's concerns, but now dropped the ball by not periodically coming forward with information on progress or lack thereof.

I would like to conclude with an example of what I think was a tremendous officer with really good communication skills. He is not an MPD officer. He is a U.S. Park Police bicycle officer. This Officer Godfrey is assigned to the parks on Capitol Hill. He is now a subscriber to our E-mail via his personal E-mail, and when somebody submits information or there is a discussion on the E-mail about something that is in his jurisdiction, he immediately gets back to us on suggestions of how he could improve the situation or requesting more information so that he can track down what happened. I feel that he is doing a tremendous PR job for the U.S. Park Service, but he also does tremendous follow-through. So people are becoming very confident of his capabilities.

I would like to conclude by saying that I think that MPD is definitely moving in the right direction, and, obviously, as a community, we wish it would move quicker, but we know these kind of changes just cannot happen overnight, but I hope that they will take a real serious look at their communication and outreach efforts with the aim of developing credibility in the community. I think they will get a lot back once they do that.

Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you, Ms. Oldenburg, for that testimony.

As I stated to the police panel, we are all very appreciative each and every day of them getting up and putting the uniform on.

Ms. OLDENBURG. I agree with you. We have great officers who work in our PSA, and I am trying to generalize. We have great individuals who we know of.

Senator BROWNBACK. We all appreciate that.

What we are searching for here is that if we are to get crime down in this country, in this Nation, it is not just a matter of hiring more police officers. We have all got to get more involved with it, and the reason why we brought both of you forward today is to recognize your efforts, volunteer efforts of people who are willing to get involved and the people around you to get involved. We have got to integrate those efforts of people volunteering along with the Police Department and all the efforts that they do by putting on the badge and going out and putting their lives on the line each and every day.

I also highlight it from the standpoint of we are not powerless in this Nation. Too much of the time, I think people view themselves as powerless to be able to get anything done. I think both of you are testimony that that is not the case. You can do something. We can work together and get this situation in a better case, and we need to get it much better, but each of you have helped in preventing crime and getting it decreased. So, for that, I commend both of you and thank you for what you are doing.

In looking at that, Mr. Foreman in particular, you note the number of people that you have involved in the Orange Coalition. Could you just describe for the people here today what they do every night? What do folks go out and do?

Mr. FOREMAN. Well, usually, after they get home from work, those who work, and those who are retired, after they wake up from their evening nap, they usually put the orange hat on their head and they head out towards the street corner.

Senator BROWNBACK. Together? I mean, there will be several together or an individual?

Mr. FOREMAN. Usually, groups together. We try to make doubly sure that there will be no individuals on the street by themselves at any given time, while they are wearing the orange hat on their head on the street corners.

We usually have groups—some groups are of different sizes. Some may have 20. Some groups may be 30. We have even some groups that we have as high as hundreds at one time in a group throughout the community, and, usually, what we usually do—most areas, we do more standing than walking. We usually stand on different corners throughout the community because, you know,

like I say, as long as you are standing you can see everything. As long as you are moving, you are out of sight, you are out of mind. So you mean nothing to anyone. So we usually stand throughout the community.

The groups usually have radios that they usually keep with every group throughout the community. As a matter of fact, in some groups, everybody in the group does have a radio, really, though, and we use video camcorders on the street. We use cameras. We use everything on the street to deter those who are coming to the community to do harm and wrong, and we usually set the video camcorders up on the sidewalk within the community, as those who come looking for drugs in the community are right around—they have to ride around through cameras the whole trip throughout the community. So they have a tendency not to stay around. They have a tendency to leave, and leave quick.

We found out one thing. With this setup that we utilize, most drug markets fall and they fall quick.

Senator BROWNBACK. What is that?

Mr. FOREMAN. Most drug markets, they cease to operate, and they case to operate very, very rapidly, really within a few days, because we found a long time ago that the average guy that is selling drugs needs to sell drugs and need to sell the drugs quickly, and he needs to pay his bill for the drugs. He needs to pay the bill for the drugs that he has in his possession, and if he cannot sell within my community, he has to leave. What we do, we stop the customer from getting to the guy who is selling drugs. That is our main purpose out there, to stop the customer from getting to the drug dealer. We put a buffer in between those two. As long as we are there, the customer will not come in because most of the customers are people like each and every one of us. We are the customers. We are working people, work for a living, who make a payroll, and once a month, every week, whatever the case may be, these are the people who buy drugs.

These are the people who ride up into people's communities where they do not live to buy drugs, and these are the people that we put the cameras on. These are the people that ride through our cameras on the street, and these are the people who ride straight through the neighborhoods and stop buying drugs in that particular neighborhood, and 2, 3, 4 days of this, no sale by the drug dealer, he cannot operate any longer. He has to leave. He must go someplace where he can sell his drugs.

He owes a bill. He must pay his bill on time. If he does not pay his bill on time, he is in trouble, and whoever he owes money to is going to deal with him harshly. So he will not stay in that community.

We know we can, wherever we go, within a few days—any drug market can fall. We found out one thing, with the help of the Police Department, no question about it, with the help of any agency that we can get to help, it makes it much easier, but we know without the commitment of the people who live in those communities, it is not going to happen.

In most instances, if the people in the community are not involved, the police cannot get into that community because most of the communities are not open to the Police Department. We usu-

ally go in and we usually open the community up. The police come in and deal with the people once we go in because it is easier for us to open it up than it is for the Police Department to open it up because, in most cases, most communities do not trust them, do not want to deal with them, and are very leery of them. So we usually go and open it up, and once the Police Department comes in, they usually end up with a great working agreement with the people who live in that community. They usually get along very well after that.

We do what we do, and we do it very well, and that is good because people—we found out one thing. The great strength in fighting crime is people in the communities. We can put 20,000 police in this city on the street, and they cannot stop it. They do not live there. They do not have that great commitment that the people who live in those communities have for their own community. They do not have that great commitment for a person's own son and daughter or grandson and granddaughter as a person who lives there do.

Our police officers come in, and they do a great job, no question about that, but the hard-core commitment is still not there. And it cannot be there. They live someplace else. They have to have a commitment for their own community, and I hope they do go and work within their own communities, but at the same time, we must have the people in the communities. And the best thing about the whole thing, the people in the community want to do—they want to work. They have a big problem.

Most communities, people do not know how to, and we usually go in and show them how to. Usually, once you go in and show a person how to do it, you cannot stop them from doing it after that, no question about it, but you can mention one thing. When you go up before what people perceive to be the baddest guys in the world, the most heavily armed guys in the world, everybody perceives that every kid selling drugs on the street is heavily armed or his comrades around him are heavily armed. In a lot of cases, it is true, no question about that. They do not be on the street naked. That is for sure.

But at the same time, they are scared to death of the people who live there. The people who live in those communities, the crooks that operate in those communities are afraid of the people. Whenever the people step up, they step back every time. Every time.

We go out on the street. Nobody in the group is of this age here. Everybody in the group—well, your age, yes—are older in the group, and we have people in the group from 45 all the way up through 80. This is the main bulk of the group, no question about it. In later years, we have had some younger folks come on, but mainly it was old-timers who made it happen, people who could not pick a physical fight with anyone at no given time. But seven, eight senior citizens walking in a community or standing in the community can wipe a drug market out just by mere presence along.

Most people do not know and do not realize that the crooks on the street are afraid of them, scared to death of them really, providing you do it in a controlled situation and do not get yourself in trouble.

Senator BROWNBACK. That is the point, I guess, that I wanted to emphasize with you, too, and I appreciate it, Mr. Foreman, that—there is an old saying, and I am paraphrasing, that the only way that evil triumphs is for good, not to step forward. So, if people just step back and keep back, their communities will continue to go down.

Mr. FOREMAN. No question.

Senator BROWNBACK. If they will step forward, they are not powerless in this system, and I appreciate you for giving them the organization, the vehicle to do that.

Ms. Oldenburg, I understand you are looking at a new E-mail project to track the criminals released from the DC criminal justice system. Is that correct?

Ms. OLDENBURG. Well, yes, that is partly it, or at least to let people know what is happening. Part of it is just the kind of information that we can get out to the community. I mean, people on our list—they are constantly saying that it gives them a sense of community to be belonging to it, even though it predominantly provides them with bad news, but it is a phenomena that the more news you have about your community, the better armed you feel to protect yourself and be preventive in your actions.

So one of the things that happens in DC is that the street officers, the PSA officers operate in the immediate, you know, what is happening today, taking care of what is happening today.

Once, for instance, somebody is arrested or even once a crime is committed, it moves out of the arena of the PSA, and if it is a crime that has been committed, it is all of a sudden turned over to a set of detectives who are removed from the PSA in large part.

So the information of what is happening about—we had nine homicides in PSA 109 in the last year and a half. We rarely can get any information about what the status is of those homicides. As far as I know, not one of them has been solved. Seven of them are drug-related. So that information sort of moves out of our arena. We can go chase it, but it does not get to us. So that is one thing.

The activity moves elsewhere once the crime is committed, and the information moves. The other thing is that once an arrest occurs and it becomes part of the court system, part of the prosecutor's office and through the court system, again, there is no tracking of this person being arrested and as they go through the process. The prosecutors have a system, but we cannot tap into that. So we cannot readily track what is happening to the people who get arrested in our community.

We know they normally get out on personal recognizance once they are arrested. So they come right back to the community and continue to commit the crimes that they committed before they were arrested, waiting for their court hearing on the previous crime.

So we want to be able to track that activity, what happens when people get into the court system and the resolution of court cases should that occur. We are starting to be better at that as a community. PSA 108 and 106 seem to have established the sort of connections they need to track a criminal beyond the police, better than we have in 109 at this point.

Senator BROWNBACK. Good.

Thank you both very much. I also want to thank the Police Department for all the work that they do. Crime is going down, but we have got a long ways to go to get it in the situation that we need to.

I appreciate the volunteer efforts of a lot of people in trying to get that situation better improved as well.

Mr. FOREMAN. I would like to say one thing.

Senator BROWNBACK. Yes, Mr. Foreman.

Mr. FOREMAN. Our efforts in the Metro orange-hat group, we have not so far wrote one proposal for any money from anyone, except for the Heritage Foundation. They forced money upon us, and they made us take it. We did not want it, but they made us take it, anyway, but other than that, there are no government funds. Everything that pertains to the organization is self-funded by people who live in those communities, throughout the area.

We are writing up proposals, do not want to—we always say as long as it is your problem, take care of your own problem, and so we take care of our own problem within our own communities, anyway.

Thank you.

Senator BROWNBACK. Thank you all very much, and thank you all for attending today as well.

The hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:08 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

717 14TH STREET, N.W., 5TH FL.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005
(202) 727-2540

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 23, 1998

Contact: Chris Bartolomucci
Direct Dial: (202) 727-9822

PRESS RELEASE

D.C. Inspector General Reports Deficiencies
In The Police Department's 911 System

Washington, D.C. - D.C. Inspector General E. Barrett Prettyman, Jr., issued a report today finding that the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) is not meeting its objective of answering every call to the MPD's 911 emergency telephone system within five seconds. In a letter to the Inspector General, Chief of Police Charles H. Ramsey called it a "helpful report" which "validates many of the department's own conclusions."

The Inspector General reported that of the nearly 250,000 calls placed to 911 in the first five months of 1998, 20% of the calls - almost 50,000 calls - were not answered for at least 16 seconds. Worse yet, over 32,000 calls - 13% of all calls - were not answered by the MPD before being abandoned by the callers. The report noted that in Baltimore, 911 calls were answered in an average of two seconds in 1997.

The Inspector General's report attributed many of the delays to an apparent abuse of sick leave by the Telephone Receipt Clerks (TRCs) who answer 911 calls. Although the MPD believes it is necessary to have a minimum of 10 TRCs per shift, the report found that "shifts usually do not have more than 7 TRCs. Even more ominous, the number of TRCs reporting for a shift often falls to 5 or 6."

According to the report, MPD officials blamed part of the leave-taking by TRCs on job-related stress. The Inspector General found, however, that the MPD provides no training or assistance to TRCs to help them cope with stress. The report also found that when stress is used as an excuse for extended sick leave, the MPD only rarely takes disciplinary action. The report recommends that the

MPD adopt a stricter leave policy and implement a stress management program for TRCs.

The Inspector General also recommended that the MPD require police officers on paid administrative leave to serve as TRCs, and that the salaries of TRCs be increased so that they are comparable to those in most surrounding jurisdictions.

Given the present rates of leave-taking, an additional 22 TRCs would have to be hired to make all shifts fully operational.

The Inspector General's report also noted that between 1996 and 1998, the MPD received 170 complaints from citizens who said that the police were slow in responding to their 911 calls or failed to respond at all. During that same time period, 28% of callers to the 911 emergency system and the 1010 non-emergency system complained of rudeness on the part of call takers.

The report states that "The universal number which serves as a lifeline for individuals in distress is '911.' Being able to make immediate connection with a 911 operator followed by a quick response from a police officer is the hallmark of a properly functioning emergency telephone system." The report concludes that the MPD "must make significant changes to improve the 911 emergency telephone system."

Inspector General Prettyman said today that "I hope this report will serve as a wake-up call. The large number of 911 calls answered after lengthy delays, or not answered at all, is troubling indeed."

The Inspector General's investigation of the 911 system was initiated as a result of numerous citizen complaints to the Inspector General's office.

The Inspector General is investigating mismanagement and corruption within the MPD.

To receive a copy of the Inspector General's report, contact Chris Bartolomucci at (202) 727-9822.

REPORT OF INVESTIGATION
98-0205

INVESTIGATION OF THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT'S 911 AND 1010 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM

1.0 Predication:

This investigation by the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) was initiated as a result of numerous citizen complaints to the Inspector General regarding the 911 (emergency) and 727-1010 (1010) (non-emergency) telephone system of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD). The complaints generally concerned calls to 911 or 1010 that were not answered, answered after significant delays, put on hold, or for any other reason did not result in prompt action by the MPD.

This Report of Investigation examines the processes involved in the emergency telephone system to identify causes of the delays and the lack of prompt police response, and to make recommendations for corrective action.

2.0 Background:

The Operations Branch, under the Technical Services Bureau within the Communications Division of the MPD, manages the 911 emergency and 1010 non-emergency telephone system. Since the mission of the MPD is to eliminate crime, fear of crime, and disorder, while establishing respect and trust within the community, the goal of the Communications Division is to answer emergency calls within 5 seconds and non-emergency calls within 12 seconds, and promptly to dispatch the

appropriate assistance to each caller. The Operations Branch is staffed by civilian personnel and is responsible for receiving, recording, and classifying requests for police services received by telephone or radio from the public or other law enforcement agencies, and to assign such requests to the appropriate component of the Department.

Telephone Receipt Clerks (TRC) answer 911 and 1010 calls for police assistance. Dispatchers are responsible for directing police units to respond to emergencies in their assigned zones. A Dispatcher can function as a TRC, but a TRC cannot function as a Dispatcher. The TRCs and Dispatchers are supervised by Shift Supervisors, and the sections are supervised by Watch Commanders. TRCs receive 8-10 weeks of classroom and on-the-job training. TRCs who demonstrate an ability to perform dispatching duties can be promoted to the Dispatcher position. Dispatchers receive an additional 2 weeks of classroom training plus 240 hours of on-the-job training.

The Telephone Reporting Unit (TRU) is located in the Public Safety Communications Center, 310 McMillan Drive, NW. The TRU takes reports for non-urgent incidents such as damage to property, lost property, stolen auto, destruction of property, stolen tags, stolen bicycles, animal bites, and hit and run accidents.

In August 1979, the Communications Division inaugurated its new Computer Assisted Dispatch (CAD) system. The CAD system is an automated online, real-time computer system which assists the MPD in providing rapid response to emergency 911 calls and 1010 non-emergency calls. Information regarding each call for emergency police assistance is typed by the TRCs on a system-generated Complaint Event Record and routed to a Dispatcher.

Depending on the location of the emergency, the CAD computer software determines which Dispatcher the call is routed to. This information is displayed on the appropriate Dispatcher's computer terminal in order to enable him or her to dispatch police help to the emergency. The system monitors the current disposition of all MPD field units. When a police car is dispatched, the system logs its dispatch time, monitors the elapsed time out of service, and logs the time the police car returns to service.

The CAD system significantly assists Dispatchers in maintaining control over emergencies and resources for which they are responsible. For example, prioritizing calls for service enables the Dispatcher quickly to select from the list of pending emergencies the next most urgent request for assistance. The CAD system operates around the clock, seven days a week.

CAD also interfaces directly with the Washington Area Law Enforcement System (WALES). WALES is a large communications network, hosted on mainframe computers located in MPD's Public Safety Computer Center. It provides the officer on the street with information, such as related to stolen vehicles and wanted individuals. CAD information is transferred to WALES to update the WALES system, and CAD personnel may also access information in WALES.

Over the next 4 years, 1998-2001, the MPD will develop a new Joint Public Safety Communications Center to enhance emergency service delivery. Over $48 million has been appropriated for this Information Technology Initiative. The Joint Public Safety Communications Center will operate one centralized 911 system within the public protection agencies. The 911 emergency call-taking and dispatching centers of the Fire Department,

Police Department, Emergency Medical Service, and the Office of Emergency Preparedness will be combined in the joint communications center, which will be located at 320 McMillan Drive, NW, near the present Center.

Citizen complaints about 911 or 1010 service are recorded on a "Communications Complaint Form 1". All complaints are required to be investigated by a Shift Supervisor or a Watch Commander. Pursuant to this procedure, a report of investigation is written in each case, and the complaint is either sustained or not sustained. The citizen who made the complaint is contacted and advised of the results of the investigation, and a notation is made on the complaint form that the results of the investigation were discussed with the citizen.

This Report, although addressing a broader scope of communications issues, substantiated several of the findings presented by Special Counsel Mark H. Tuohey before the City Council's Special Committee on Police Misconduct, on June 1, 1998.

3.0 FINDING NUMBER 1

The Communications Division is not accomplishing its mission of answering emergency calls within 5 seconds, or non-emergency calls within 12 seconds.

Discussion

The emergency telephone system is maintained by Bell-Atlantic. Examination of the system-generated data between January and May 1998, pertaining to delays in answering 911 and 1010 calls, revealed that for the 5-month period examined, a total of 249,373 calls were made to 911. The data available does not show precisely how many of these calls were answered within 5 seconds, because the time

periods on the system are not divided that way. However, the data does reveal:

- Calls answered within 8 seconds totaled 167,908
- Calls answered within 16 to 80 seconds totaled 49,249
- Abandoned calls (calls not answered) totaled 32,216 [Exhibits 5.1,5.2]

For the same 5-month period, a total of 308,526 calls were made to 1010 and answered as follows:

- Calls answered within 8 seconds totaled 164,406
- Calls answered within 16 to 80 seconds totaled 98,549
- Abandoned calls (calls not answered) totaled 45,571 [Exhibits 5.3,5.4].

The Operations Branch has 15 terminals for receiving 911 and 1010 calls. Calls to 911 that are not answered after 7 rings receive the following system announcement:

> "Due to a large volume of emergency calls for assistance, there is a brief delay in answering your call. Please stay on the line and your call will be answered."

Calls to 1010 that are not answered after 7 rings receive the following system announcement:

> "You have reached the Metropolitan Police Department's non-emergency number 727-1010. Due to a large number of emergency calls there is a brief delay in answering your call. Please stay on the line and your call will be

answered. Should you have an emergency please dial 911 [Exhibit 5.5].

3.1 FINDING NUMBER 2

The reason that the Communications Division is unable to handle calls in a timely fashion is that, on a regular basis, insufficient numbers of TRCs and Dispatchers are reporting for work. Abuse of sick leave appears to be the primary cause of this deficiency.

Discussion

The Operations Branch consists of 3 sections -- A, B, and C, as well as the TRU. The 3 sections work the following shifts:

Section B - 0700 to 1500 hours
Section A - 1500 to 2300 hours
Section C - 2300 to 0700 hours

In the Operations Branch there are 15 terminals for receiving 911 and 1010 calls, and 10 terminals for dispatching assistance to citizens. Therefore, a **fully** manned shift would consist of 15 TRCs and 11 Dispatchers (including one "Floater"). This is the **ideal** number of employees working each shift and would enable the Operations Branch to be fully effective. In management's view, the **minimum** number of employees necessary for a shift adequately to accomplish its mission is 10 TRCs and 10 Dispatchers: Below that minimum, a shift cannot effectively accomplish its mission. In reality, while 10 Dispatchers usually report for work, shifts regularly do not have more than 7 TRCs [Exhibits 5.6,5.7]. Even more ominous, the number of TRCs reporting for a shift often falls to 5 or 6

[Exhibit 5.8]. This deficit must be made up by holding workers over from the previous shift.

According to management, the principal reason for these staff shortages is the abuse of sick leave by the Operations Branch employees.

TRCs and Dispatchers do not have weekends off due to the much higher volume of calls on weekends. Requests to take leave on weekends are granted based on seniority. Unfortunately, it is quite common for TRCs and Dispatchers to call in sick on weekends [Exhibit 5.9].

MPD management advised that one reason for the unusual amount of sick leave by TRCs may be caused by job-related stress. There is a great deal of stress associated with taking 911 calls. TRCs answer 911 calls from frantic children and callers who have been stabbed, beaten, or shot, or are threatening to commit suicide. Moreover, a review of the Communications Division Complaint Control Logs for 1996 and 1998, and Communications Complaint Form 1 for 1997, revealed that an average of 28% of 911 and 1010 callers complained about rude TRCs. Rudeness is a common outward manifestation of stress.

The training curriculum for TRCs and Dispatchers does not include material which would prepare TRCs to handle the stress associated with their duties. Nor does the Communications Division offer stress management counseling.

However, management concedes that even taking stress into consideration, sick leave in all probability has been abused. It is also management's view that if sick leave continues at its current rate, 22 additional TRCs will have to be hired in order to make all shifts fully

operational. This would increase the total number of TRCs from 37 t0 59. However, if sick leave abuse were to be substantially eliminated, current staffing levels would be adequate. While management is taking measures to monitor the use of sick leave with a view towards eliminating its abuse, it is too early to tell whether these efforts will substantially affect a course of conduct that appears to be deeply engrained in the TRC and Dispatcher experience [Exhibit 10]. Disciplinary action is not generally taken in cases of sick leave abuse. In fact, management has expressed to the OIG its concern that employees might quit their jobs if meaningful sanctions were taken as a remedy for sick leave abuse.

Another aspect of the staffing problem that requires comment is the salary level of the personnel answering emergency and non-emergency calls in the District. Their salaries range from $20,982 to $26,920 (or an average of $23,951) for TRCs and from $23,173 to $29,795 (or an average of $26,484) for dispatchers. In Fairfax County, Virginia, operators and dispatchers are in the same pay scale, and their salaries range from $26,214 to $44,835. The City of Alexandria also uses the same pay scale for both types of workers, and salaries range from $27,970 to $43,911. In Prince Georges County, Maryland, Dispatchers make from $23,434 to $38,922 in their first year, and $28,647 - $47,991 after three years. In Montgomery County, operators and dispatchers, who are in the same pay scale, make from $25,356 to $41,433. Only in the City of Baltimore are the salaries comparable to D.C. The salaries there start at $20,500 for operators and $25,000 for dispatchers.

Considering the amount of stress inherent in the job, and the high degree of judgment and attention

to detail required, it is remarkable that these salaries are so low.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDINGS NUMBER 1 and 2

Increase salary levels for TRCs and Dispatchers so that they are comparable to those in most surrounding jurisdictions;

Develop a policy aimed at eliminating the abuse of sick leave. Such a policy might include strict disciplinary actions and imposing leave restrictions;

If the policy, or other measures, aimed at eliminating the abuse of sick leave is not effective, then consider hiring up to an additional 22 TRCs in order to make the Operations Branch fully operational;

Require physical and psychological suitability testing as part of the screening process for prospective TRCs, and develop a stress management program for TRCs and Dispatchers;

Require Police Officers who are on paid administrative leave to serve as TRCs;

Conduct a review and comparative study of the 911 and non-emergency systems used by neighboring jurisdictions. For example, the Baltimore Police Department has 25 Terminal positions for receiving 911 and 311 (non-emergency) calls. Generally, 16 positions are operated in the 911 mode, and 9 positions are operated in the 311 mode. The operating mode of the terminals is interchangeable. In the event of a city-wide emergency, all positions, or as many as necessary, can be switched to the 911 mode. Civilians staff the 911

positions, and Police Officers, on limited duty, staff the 311 positions;

Baltimore operates three shifts: 6:30a.m.- 2:30p.m.; 2:30p.m.- 10:30p.m.; 10:30p.m.- 6:30a.m. All shifts are not staffed at the same level. Based on their experience, the morning shift does not require all positions to be manned;

Sick leave in Baltimore is accumulated at the rate of 1 day a month (12 days a year). A doctor's note is required after 2 days of sick leave, and disciplinary action is taken if this rule is violated. In fact, employees have been terminated for abusing sick leave or for being physically unfit; and

In Baltimore, in 1997, 1.1 million 911 calls were received -- or almost twice as many as in the District, and 604,753 calls were received on 311 -- or slightly less than in the District. The average time taken to answer 911 calls in Baltimore is 2 seconds (there is no data on how long it takes to answer 311 calls).

Stress management is part of Baltimore's training program. Its annual in-service training program includes:

- - A presentation on stress management by consultants;

- - A presentation by the Police Officer Critical Incident Team; and

- - The Chaplain Program - a city-funded, ongoing stress management counseling service available to operators and dispatchers at any time.

Thus, in terms of sick leave, stress management, positions filled, and efficiency of the system, Baltimore is substantially ahead of the District.

3.2 FINDING NUMBER 3

The MPD is not responding in a timely fashion to the scene of emergency and non-emergency requests for assistance.

Discussion

In calendar years 1996, 1997, and through May 19, 1998, the Operations Branch received 130, 162 and 94 citizen complaints, respectively. Review of the Communications Division's Complaint Control logs for 1996 and 1998, and Communications Complaint Form 1 for 1997, revealed many citizen complaints concern slow or no Police responses. In 1996, 77 (60%) of the 130 complaints concerned slow or no Police responses. In 1997, 62 (38%) of the 162 complaints concerned slow or no Police responses. Through May 1998, 31 (33%) of the 94 complaints concerned slow or no Police responses.

Operations Branch management cited two principal reasons for complaints concerning slow or no Police responses. First is a shortage of Police Officers. In this regard, according to the MPD Human Resources Bureau, the number of Police Officers has fluctuated over the last few years. In 1996, there were 3,561 officers, and 3,636 in 1997. Currently, there are 3,591 sworn officers. MPD is actively recruiting for additional officers.

The second reason cited is the new concept in community policing known as the Police Service Area (PSA). In July 1997, MPD implemented a new strategy of community policing. This strategy put residents in direct contact with officers who work

in their PSAs. The basic unit of the MPD is the PSA team. The primary mission and responsibilities of the PSA team include:

- Eliminating crime, fear and disorder in the assigned PSA and building trust and respect in neighborhoods and communities;

- Accepting full accountability for crime, fear and disorder in the assigned PSA;

- Coordinating and deploying all resources in the PSA;

- Establishing and maintaining consistency in the PSA to ensure that high standards are maintained, and retaining the flexibility required to adjust to the changing needs of PSA team's primary customers; and

- Developing relationships with the community and mobilizing community volunteers and other resources in the PSA.

By Special Order of former Chief of Police Larry D. Soulsby, dated August 31, 1997, mandatory minimum staffing levels were set for each of the 83 PSAs, and procedures were established for maintaining minimum staffing levels [Exhibit 5.11].

Each police district is divided into PSAs, and Police Officers are assigned to a specific PSA. The MPD districts are divided as follows:

1st District-12 PSAs
2nd District- 9 PSAs
3rd District-14 PSAs
4th District-14 PSAs
5th District-13 PSAs

6th District-10 PSAs
7th District-11 PSAs

PSA team members must report to their Dispatcher upon reporting for duty and going off duty. The Dispatcher enters the duty status of the PSA team into the CAD. Under the new strategy of community policing, Police Officers are only dispatched within their assigned PSA.

However, PSA teams are not always available for assignments. Reasons for this include, but are not limited to, personal leave, sick leave, court appearances, temporary detail, training, meetings, and limited duty status. When a PSA team is not available for assignment, the Dispatcher must wait until another team from the same PSA becomes available, unless the operator deems the call to be of the highest priority. Requests for emergency assistance must be held in a pending mode on the CAD Waiting Calls Screen. A waiting call that is a Priority One is displayed in red on the CAD monitor and is assigned to the next available PSA team [Exhibit 5.12].

In order to alleviate duplicate calls and complaints regarding slow Police responses, TRCs now recite, pursuant to a Division Order dated December 18, 1997, the following closing statement to callers with non-priority emergencies:

> "This report will only be handled by an officer assigned to your Patrol Service Area (PSA), therefore a delayed response can be expected." [Exhibit 5.13].

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FINDING NUMBER 3

It is beyond the ambit of this investigation to evaluate the overall value of the PSA policing

system. But any future study of that system must take into consideration the limitations it imposes upon quick responses to emergency calls. Even assuming that there is utility generally in assigning police units to their own PSAs and concentrating their efforts there, does it make sense to use the PSA system as a barrier to "intrusion" by otherwise available police units from other PSAs that are attempting to answer a true emergency?

Conduct a quality assurance study to ascertain the level of customer satisfaction with the new policing strategy.

4.0 SUMMARY

The universal number recognized as a lifeline for individuals in distress is "911". Being able to make immediate connection with a 911 operator followed by a quick response from a police officer is the hallmark of a properly functioning emergency telephone system.

The District of Columbia MPD must make significant changes to improve its 911 emergency telephone system. MPD must elevate the operation of the 911 emergency telephone system to the same level as the important function it serves. The technology behind the emergency telephone system must be up-to-date. Employees operating the emergency telephone system must be highly qualified and properly trained. Salaries must also reflect the importance and degree of responsibility placed on the person occupying the position.

Citizens calling 911 for emergency assistance must be able to speak immediately to an operator and not have to listen to a recording instructing them to

stay on the line. The caller may not have that option. Citizens should not have to abandon their calls to 911, only to call again and again in an attempt to reach a live person.

There are only two possible answers here. One is to treat stress as inevitable, assume that there will continue to be excessive sick leave, and hire enough additional employees to bring the working staff to acceptable levels. The problem with this solution is that it presumes that stress really is the primary cause of the current level of excessive sick leave - a presumption that is not at all clear from the known facts - and it further presumes that additional employees will not become subject to the same levels of stress - another presumption that is highly suspect. Even if sick leave is directly related to stress, the stress inherent in the job of answering emergency calls does not stem primarily from too few people manning the phones but rather from the nature of the calls themselves (no matter how many there are). Therefore, whether stress is a legitimate part of the problem, or largely a ruse, or some combination of the two, hiring additional personnel will not entirely correct the present situation.

What makes more sense is to combine a larger staff with (a) an effective program to combat stress and fatigue and (b) zero tolerance for feigned illness. There clearly must be additional employees. Under any construction, the present staff is too small to respond effectively to the number of calls now being received. But adding employees who themselves either become incapacitated or take advantage of the situation to remain at home will only exacerbate the problem. An effective health insurance program will pay for itself both by making more people available for work and by eliminating any excuse to remain away.

Thus, a stress management program should be available for all 911 employees. Citizens should expect that operators will be courteous and assuring and not rude because of the stress associated with their job.

Prompt response by the police is a must. Sufficient police units should always be available to respond to emergencies. A delayed response may be no better than not responding at all.

Citizens have a right to expect that in the event of an emergency, their lifeline to the Police will not fail them.

5.0 EXHIBITS

5.1 Summary of calls to 911

5.2 System Generated 911 Delayed Calls Statistics

5.3 Summary of Calls to 727-1010

5.4 System Generated 1010 Delayed Calls Statistics

5.5 Emergency - 911 System Announcements

5.6 Interview of Lieutenant Gerald Barnes

5.7 Interview of Watch Commander Cheryl P. Gatlin

5.8 Memorandum by Captain Joel R. Maupin, dated April 21, 1998, subject: Baseline Report for the Communications Division

5.9 Interview of Captain Joel R. Maupin, Director, Communications Division

5.10 Office Memorandum by Captain Joel R. Maupin, subject: Use of Sick Leave by Division Personnel

5.11 Special Order, dated August 31, 1997, subject: Police Service Area Minimum Staffing

5.12 Five examples of investigation reports regarding slow police response:

a. July 10, 1997,
b. August 27, 1997,
c. October 6, 1997,
d. December 19, 1997,
e. December 23, 1997

5.13 Division Order, dated December 18, 1997, subject: Telephone Receipt Clerks (TRCs) New Closing Statement

Statement of Charles H. Ramsey
Chief of Police, Metropolitan Police Department

Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia

July 27, 1998

Senator Brownback, distinguished members of the Subcommittee and guests -- I appreciate the opportunity to update you on the Metropolitan Police Department's continuing efforts to reduce crime and improve the quality of life in our nation's capital. This afternoon, I want to focus on two issues -- emergency communications and community policing -- that are of critical importance to our mission. Each of these issues is significant in and of itself. But they become especially important because the two issues are so closely related. An efficient, technologically sound 9-1-1 system not only enables the police to respond quickly to crimes in progress and other emergencies. It is also critical to ensuring that our police officers have sufficient time, free from answering 9-1-1 calls, to really engage the community in identifying and solving neighborhood crime problems. 9-1-1 response remains a foundation of what the Police Department does, and it is critical that we get it right, especially as we move aggressively to expand community policing.

Inspector General Prettyman's recent report on the District's 9-1-1 system was helpful, in that it validated many of the Police Department's own conclusions about emergency communications in the District of Columbia. Specifically, it identified three critical areas that the MPD -- with the help of Congress, the City Council and others -- is working diligently to address.

- First is the facility itself. To be successful, we must have a modern emergency communications center that is capable of handling the large volume of calls for service we now receive. Our existing facility, on the sixth floor of Police Headquarters, was designed in a different era, for a different era. Plans are under way to construct a new, joint emergency communications center that would combine call taking and dispatching for all public safety agencies in the District. As the Inspector General points out, this project may not be fully operational until the year 2001. I would hope that we could either speed up the implementation timetable or be prepared in the meantime to make needed upgrades to the existing center.

- Second is the computer hardware and software that are backbone of the system. Once again, our Department finds itself behind the curve technologically. Our current computer-aided dispatch (or CAD) system was installed in the early 1990s. It was state-of-the-art at the time, but we have fallen a few generations behind in this technology. What we are exploring now is a new CAD system that will not only improve police response in the short term by providing dispatchers with more -- and more useful -- information. This system would also provide Department managers with the data we need to make longer-range plans around resource allocation, police service boundaries, and customer service and citizen satisfaction benchmarks. A new CAD system is a central element of our entire information technology plan.

- The third area involves the people who operate the system. The Inspector General made it painfully clear that we do not have enough emergency communications personnel, they are not paid competitive salaries, and their working conditions are inadequate. We are continuing to

work with the District's Personnel Office to fill the more than two dozen vacancies that currently exist in our Communications Division. In the meantime, I have detailed other personnel -- including several officers on limited-duty status -- to the 9-1-1 center to augment existing personnel. Division managers have also instituted new procedures for reducing sick leave abuses (another problem identified in the Inspector General's report), and we are creating new and comprehensive stress management programs to reduce stress-related illnesses and enhance performance in this very difficult environment. But the most important change needed in this area is to make the salaries of our emergency communications personnel more competitive with those of neighboring jurisdictions. While our call-takers are starting at approximately $21,000 a year, those in suburban Maryland and Virginia are earning salaries that are anywhere from 11 percent to 33 percent higher. Simple economics tell you that we cannot attract and retain employees in this environment. Legislation to upgrade the pay scale of our call-takers and dispatchers has been submitted to the City Council, and we are hopeful they will support it.

As I mentioned, the efficient handling of emergency calls for service is critical to the success of community policing. The good news is that even with the shortcomings of the current 9-1-1 system, our community policing model continues to show great progress and promise. The PSA (or police service area) concept has been in place for just over a year, and there are still many areas (including staffing, training and operations) where improvement is needed. However, as I think you will hear from some of the citizens groups who will also be testifying this afternoon, we have made significant progress in laying the foundation for community policing in the District of Columbia.

Barriers between the police and the community are beginning to come down. Residents are beginning to identify with their police officers, just as police officers are beginning to identify with the communities they serve. This has been particularly important in our more troubled, higher-crime neighborhoods where relations between the police and the community have traditionally been the most strained. The visibility of uniformed police officers has increased overall. We have a greater level of "beat integrity" today -- officers who are able to stay on their assigned PSAs so they can get to know the people, the problems and the resources in the community. Many of our officers and their supervisors report a new sense of pride in their PSAs and a new sense of ownership of the problems that exist there.

Perhaps most important of all, the PSA model has caused our Department to refocus its energies and efforts on what is truly important to our customers: fighting crime and restoring order, in partnership with the community. Over the past year, serious crime in the District of Columbia has declined -- and declined sharply -- in all crime categories and in all seven police districts. While it would be premature to attribute this decline solely to the PSA model, the numbers suggest that significant crime reductions can be achieved under community policing.

These qualities I have identified -- stronger bonds between police and community, enhanced police presence, increased responsibility and accountability, a renewed focus on crime and disorder -- they are more than just indicators of progress to date. They are the foundation upon which we will build the PSA model of the future. And I think it is a good foundation. With the continued help of the community, the City Council, Congress and others, we can build upon this foundation in the months and years ahead. Addressing problems in our emergency communications system is a critical part of this process. I have asked the Office of the Inspector General, having identified the problems and the potential for solutions, to support the Police Department in obtaining the necessary funding to implement needed changes. I hope I can rely on the support of this body as well. Thank you very much.

METRO ORANGE COALITION

Where Caring People Meet

Citizen patrols are perhaps the most effective way of signaling community involvement. Citizen patrols have turned the tables on drug dealers by using the same techniques dealers employ to gain territory, by banding together as a group; by broadcasting memberships in a highly organized group, citizens can thwart drug activities in their neighborhoods.

In order to be effective citizen patrols must be highly visible, must be serious, and must be willing to take concrete action to red their neighborhoods of drug dealers.

This means patrol members should patrol when the drug dealers are out on the street; the most active hours are 7 pm to 11 pm. It is also recommended that orange hats be purchased before the group becomes active on the street. Various kinds of equipment can be used to increase the perception that the group is part of an even larger conitigent and is a direct link with law enforcement. For example, patrols should carry and use walkie-talkies, video cameras, note pads and pencils. While on patrol, members should collect as much information as possible about the drug dealers and their customers: this means noting, names, dates, times, locations of transactions, places where drugs are slashed, and license plate numbers, description of vehicles observed been used by dealers and customers. Dealers concerning individuals is also helpful--sex, race, height, weight. The more detailed the information, the more likely it is that the police will target an individual for surveillance.

While drug dealers may know that Orange Hat patrols have no arrest and enforcement power, drug customers are often shaken by the presence of well organized Orange Hatters taking their license plate number, jotting down their description and taking video picture of their transaction. When patrols conduct these kind activities on a regular basis, rapidity that is starting to new Orange Hat Patrol members. Remarks from one new member, "It's amazing you come around the corner and the drug dealer freeze in their tracks like a deer caught in a light. Cars start backing down the street so you can't read their license plate numbers. Within minutes of pulling out a video camcorder, there isn't a dealer within sight, where before there was a dozen or more drug dealers blocking the sidewalk.

The overall effect of Orange Hat patrols is to throw an element of uncertainty into the marketplaces to keep the market place off balance and increase the element of distrust already present in the drug dealer-buyer relationship.

To encourage residents to become involved in anti-drug activities, members of the Fairlawn Coalition believe it is important to show them what is actually going on in the community. People who attend meetings are taken on a walk through the area to see the problems to help them understand the impact drug activity is having on their neighborhood.

When asked to help other MOC communities organize against illegal drug activities, the ~~Fairlawn~~ Coalition educates them about the strategies that they have been using successfully. Though some are afraid of drug dealers, Coalition members emphasize that there is safety in numbers and they challenge and coax residents to take action. The drugs dealers depend on citizens inertia from remaining afraid. Once citizens form a group and take power, they realize that they have power to run the drug dealers out of their neighborhoods and they no longer fear them.

Resources:

Police officers were assigned to protect residents as they patrolled the neighborhood and the community/police relationship improved as police learned that residents were determined to take back their neighborhoods. Residents and police now cooperate: Residents provide information about suspicious activity and see that police act on the information; uniformed police offers regularly accompany the patrol; undercover police officers often walk with residents on patrol; police refer residents of other neighborhoods to The Metro Orange Coalition for help in organizing patrols.

Advice to Others:

The Metro Orange Coalition believes that a critical element of the group's success is their commitment to change the environment they live in. We encourage residents in other communities to get involved and "believe that each individual can make a difference."

Equipment:

Video Camcorders have been an important tool. They have been used to rid communities of illegal drug activities. They are set up on street corners with the groups of orange hatters recording vehicular and pedestrian traffic moving in and out of drug markets. Information is turned over to law enforcement.

Radios are used by group members to communicate between different locations.

Orange hats and jackets are used to identify the group members.

A drive through drug customer who spots a group of people carry the walkie-talkies, wearing bright orange hats, and talking down license plate numbers is not quite sure what is happening. Are the police setting him up? Who is that person on the walkie-talkie? Why is that person taking my picture? Rather then risk arrest or publicity, most drug drive away, mark the location as one that is now risky at best. After a just a few weeks of dedicated effort, every patrol reports that drug activity goes into a sharp decline.

Citizen patrols do more than just discouraged drug dealing, however. They also change how the police view the entire community. A common interest in the neighborhood and to dramatically increase police patrols within the community. With increased police presence and improved information provided by Orange Hat Patrols members.

Experience in communities across the Metro area has shown that violence by drug dealers against Orange Hat members is extremely rare. Dealers are loathe to draw attention to themselves, and recognize that assaulting an Orange Hat member is just one step removed from assaulting a police officer. Nonetheless, precautions should be taken to avoid physical confrontation verbal affronts between drug dealers and buyers and Orange Hat patrols has proven not to be drug-related violence, but membership attrition, especially after immediate goals have been achieved. However, several steps have proven effective at keep patrols enthusiasm and membership up.

The first step is to disseminate information about the patrols activities. A well written flyer about the patrol should be distributed to homes and mailboxes in the neighborhood. In addition, neighborhood rallies of marches can help launch an Orange Hat Patrol recruitment effort and early investment in Orange Hats, Walkie-talkies and other equipment can help solidity group membership.

I have witnessed the positive effects of Orange Hats' involvement in Washington, D.C. neighborhoods. They helped restore not only order and a drug-free area, but liberty to neighborhoods that were the victims of some of society's worst predators.

The very notion of individual liberty had been turned up side down in the neighborhood. Law-abiding citizens were being held prisoners in their own homes. Their jailers were not government prison wardens and guards. They were violent criminals, who roam the streets with impunity, taking what they wished and terrorizing at will. They spread the poison of drugs and guns and the violence it inevitably brings, wreaking havoc on the community.

The Orange Hat Coalition has been instrumental in getting many of these things off the street. They were removed from

the community with the help of the Police Department and the F.B.I. The citizens realize that we need to take back our neighborhoods, to make them safe for men and women to walk in, for children to play in. Civil liberties are not just for accused criminals, but are, first and foremost, for law abiding citizens. One of those civil liberties is the freedom to walk freely and without fear in one's own neighborhood.

The Orange Hat Coalitions are making that difference around the city. We have reclaimed most of our streets and neighborhoods from open air markets.

In the 80's and early 90's, open air drug markets, were everyone, in every neighborhood and section, but in 1995 an open air drug market is almost a thing of the past.

The once escalating crime rate in Washington, D.C., has declined and in some areas the decline is substantial. The progress we have made against crime is largely a result of a strong effort by law enforcement, both local and federal, with outstanding commitment by D.C. National Guard which provided flood lights and manpower. The effort of General Davis Commander of the DC Guard has been outstanding. From the very conception of the Orange Hatters, Deputy Chief Joyce Leland, D.C. Police Department has helped make this venture a success and the Washington Bureau of the F.B.I. for day to day help in our effort.

Metro Orange Coalition receives no government funds, local or federal. These efforts can be duplicated throughout the country at minimum monetary cost. We are willing and able to help all that need it whatever "State" they may live.

STATEMENT

by

Kirsten U. Oldenburg
representing Capitol Hill's PSA 109

Prepared for
U.S. Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, Restructuring, and the District of Columbia

Hearing on "Keeping the Nation's Capitol Safe"
on Monday, July 27, 1998

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss with you the community's role in ensuring neighborhood safety.

I am self-employed (as an environmental policy researcher and writer and a gardener) and volunteer about 10 hours per week of my time helping the Capitol Hill community in Washington DC work cooperatively with the police to improve our safety. I have been doing this for almost a decade. Most of this time, I worked--along with a dedicated group of people--within what was then called Beat 26. We were the first neighborhood in DC to organize around a police beat boundary, and this was largely due to the efforts of Sgt. Wally Bradford. He was an anomaly at MPD, trying to practice community policing in the early 1990s with little support from his superiors.

For Beat 26, we set up a system of block captains, published a bi-monthly newsletter with crime statistics and prevention tips, held periodic community meetings, organized orange hats, and met often with the Beat sergeant and officers. During the financially lean years, we donated much needed items (such as, copy paper, fax toner, and floor tiles) to the First District's Substation on Capitol Hill and an occasional part for our patrol car. In June 1997, the MPD reorganized the patrol beats, and we now have the PSA system. The work we had been doing was subsumed into PSA 109, an area twice as large as was Beat 26. It is very diverse, economically and socially; part residential, part business. It is also diverse in other ways: it has drug markets and an average of 68 reported crimes per month. Among them are homicides, robberies, burglaries, thefts, thefts from autos, and stolen autos.

Thinking back over the years, I can definitely say the situation is better today. Crime is down and with the PSA system came a changing attitude of MPD toward community policing. There are a few more officers on the streets, who for the most part stay within their assigned PSA; and unlike Beat sergeants, PSA sergeants have considerable latitude in how they use their resources. But, I do not feel that the PSAs are necessarily led efficiently, staffed sufficiently, and officers trained properly to do the work the PSA model suggests. MPD officers have been trained to be reactive (i.e., to chase criminals), rather than proactively work on the problems that foster criminal behavior.

Were they trained in communications, outreach, and the skills necessary to work with other city departments, the quantity problem probably would not be so apparent. From a community organizing perspective, the PSAs may be too large. We can no longer coalesce in the personal way that we did with Beat 26. Even those of us who are very active no longer know, or even recognize, all the officers assigned to the PSA.

Strong messages from MPD leadership that community policing is here to stay and will be rewarded and improved training could, over time, eliminate most of the problems we now see with the PSAs. It will also take time for many in the community--especially those who view the police as the enemy or fear retribution from their neighbors if they contact the police--to develop a trusting relationship with the PSA officers. To reach a point where there is a true partnership between the community and MPD will require MPD to work intently on communications and outreach. In general, MPD officials and officers do not yet believe that keeping the community well informed makes their job easier to do. MPD is constantly asking the community to supply it with information (to help catch criminals) but does not often reciprocate unless asked to do so.

More than two years ago I originated an email crime alert system because I felt the paper newsletter did not get crime information out to the community quickly enough. Today PSA 109 Crimemail has over 500 subscribers. (Three other adjacent PSAs on Capitol Hill now have these systems, and one in NW DC has just started one. We are linked to one another and often share relevant news.) I send out a 2- to 4-page message about once a week, depending on need. It contains up-to-date information on crime incidents, as well as news and comments sent in by subscribers. Despite its predilection for bad news, subscribers often comment that the system gives them a sense of community. As a community we share information on:

- good and bad policing,
- criminals sought and caught,
- frustrations when MPD systems (such as 727-1010 and 911) don't work and reassurance when they do,
- details on crime that encourage us all to practice prevention,
- who to contact about problems affecting the quality of life in our community,
- how to register bicycles and get those expired parking stickers off a cars windows, and
- lost and found cats and dogs.

Once a month I also send out an email message with a list of and annotated information on all the (Part I) crimes reported in the previous month. (This information is also graphically presented on a map our website: <www.doddsdesign.com/PSA109/>.) The timely information on incidents is supplied to me and the other volunteer email editors by an officer--Rita Hunt--in the First District substation on Capitol Hill. Unfortunately, this is not a system the First District has put in place, but relies on this one officer. When she is away, the information flow stops. As a volunteer, I haven't got the time to chase MPD information, except for that which is most urgent. I know all the PSA emails on Capitol Hill are providing an immense service to both the community and MPD. I am perplexed, though, at why MPD does not create a system to assure we get timely information. Especially, since MPD has no other way to efficiently reach residents today. I also am often annoyed that our officers rarely respond to the many questions subscribers submit on police operations and service. (We have long had our PSA sergeant, a few officers,

the Captain of the Substation, and the First District commander on our PSA email list, but they have to do this via their home email addresses.) Often it appears that MPD would rather that the community stay uninformed about the realities of police work.

Here are two specific examples of what I consider poor communication on the part of the police with the community. The first involves failure to follow through, causing a loss of initial goodwill and feeding the perception that police officials talk but don't act. The second illustrates a systematic problem; an inability of MPD officials to judge when to voluntarily come forward with information. Third, I present an opposite example of how one police officer seems to understand the value of not letting community concerns about police service go answered.

- Dropping the Ball. Back in April and May we had a lot of discussion on the email about our drug markets and lack of any evidence that police were doing anything about them. Finally, as the discussions built to a crescendo, the First District commander (McManus) informed us (through our PSA sergeant and through a telephone conversation with me) that he had arranged for a Drug Enhancement Unit to operate in our area. People were very pleased. Two months later, residents who live in the area of the drug markets report little obvious police activity and no change in the market activity. Where is that Enhancement Unit? What is/was it doing? We don't know.

- Failure to Volunteer Information. In June, PSA 109 was hit with 28 burglaries, the highest monthly number we have had since January 1997 (see attachment). Our PSA sergeant alerted us to this in mid-June. There was one arrest of a burglar in July (in PSA 106); but although we don't have complete July data yet, we know burglaries are continuing. Incoming email messages are starting to reflect a frustration with lack of information about how police are handling this problem. People are getting tired of hearing what they can do to prevent burglaries; they want to know what MPD is doing to prevent them. Silence from MPD.

- Getting Ahead of Problems. Just a few weeks ago we discovered that there is a U.S. Park Police bicycle officer (Godfrey) assigned to the parks on Capitol Hill. He is now a subscriber to the PSA 109 email (via his personal email). When someone submits information about a problem in his jurisdiction, he immediately sends back a message (that I publish in the next email), often requesting more information so that he can figure out how to assure improved performance on the part of the Park police. Great PR with effective follow through.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that MPD is definitely moving in the right direction. As a community, we naturally wish it would move quicker but understand that the changes the organization is undergoing will take time. I would hope, however, that MPD takes a serious look at its communication and outreach efforts with the aim of developing credibility with the community. From my perspective, it will pay off, big time.

Attachments:
Example of a PSA 109 Crimemail message
PSA 109 Crime Report Statistics, January 1997 to June 1998
PSA 109 Map depicting location and type of all June 1998 crime reports

To PSA 109 Email list (6/3): (Continuing) Burglaries

BURGLARIES
--1109 Constitution NE, 5/29, between 630-11pm
Burglar apparently got in through (unlocked/open??) front door. House occupied at the time (i.e., B1) but person was not aware of burglary until someone called because purse and contents (including substantial amount of cash) were found at 10th & G NE (in 5D).
--137 12th NE, 5/30, 5pm
Occupants returning home, heard a noise (apparently of exiting burglar) as they entered. Found missing: a camera bag, lens, and tripod head. Burglar had entered house by breaking screen in side window.

FULL MAY CRIME REPORTS
will be in next email. Burglaries are UP; every other category DOWN. Both PSA 109 and 108 are having problems with people leaving their windows open. Burglars are quite handy at cutting screens. Keep those doors and windows shut and locked when you are not around to monitor who comes and goes.

FELONY THREAT, UNREGISTERED GUN
These are two categories of crime we don't normally report. But, on 6/2 police arrested a man at 1108 E SE under them. He apparently threatened a woman in the house (which is a rooming house owned by someone who lives in Virginia). Turned out the arrestee was a fugitive from justice (Baton Rouge).

RITA SAYS ...
... a number of residents in the Lincoln Park area have noticed increased police presence. This is apparently the Park Police (under Capt Laury) who have stepped up patrolling to control quality of life issues in Lincoln and Stanton Parks.

BICYCLE COMPLAINT BECOMES TRAINING VIDEO
According to Senior Officer Wally Bradford (MPD Training Division), the person who shared with us her frustrating time trying to register a bicycle has now let MPD put herself and her experience on tape. About 20 minutes worth; may be cut in various ways for training purposes.

PSA 109 MEETING WITH SGT PARKER
Saturday, June 6, 930am; Location: Substation (500 E St SE)
(Still) Proposed Agenda: A real honest discussion about what police officers and residents--working together--can realistically do about the festering problems (loitering and drug dealing) in the "East of 13th" area of PSA 109.

CAC MEETING, Monday June 15, 700pm
Special Guest: Chief Ramsey. Location: 1D Station, 415 4th Street SW.
Note: we erred on the time in last email. It starts at 7pm, not 730pm.

AMBROSE COMMUNITY MEETING WITH CHIEF RAMSEY
Wednesday, June 24, 630 to 830 pm, Hine Junior High School Auditorium
Need more info? Call 724-8072

----------RESIDENTS NEWS/COMMENTS----------

SEAT BELT TICKET STORY CONTINUES
(#1) THIN LINE. As a resident of the eastern section of the beat I feel the need to speak up regarding the seat belt discussion (the person who was "livid" for getting a ticket and the author of "NO SEAT BELT TICKET").

First let me thank Capt McManus, officer Barksdale (and the countless other officers that pass through the beat) for your efforts in this part of the beat - you are making a difference. Simply put, crime on my block (15th Street) is declining. This neighborhood is transitioning. We have gone from a high amount of criminal activity like having my car shot (it was parked and I was not in it), drug dealing, etc. to significant quiet. While we are not crime free we are moving in the right direction. To the members of law enforcement in this area - we need you, we want you, we thank you and we are going to work with you to make the neighborhood safe again.

One problem I see is the perception of selective enforcement. When a police officer enforces the law the perpetrator may often feel victimized. It does not matter whether you live here or in Idaho. I think that is why our seatbelt author was "livid" after getting a no-seatbelt ticket at 16th and D. Telling the guy that he is "confused or misinformed" is not going to help. This is especially true when you see the volume and severity of crime(s) (like homicide and daily drug dealing) and you are ticketed three minutes after your parking meter expired. I share the guy's anger when I get a ticket for trash that someone else "illegally" dumped. I share his anger when generally law abiding citizens are held to the letter of the law while criminals are not held to the same high standards. The criminals seem to be unfettered.

Another problem I see is community apathy. We expect MPD to do all of the work in making us safe. We expect them to do a lot of explaining why the guy got the seatbelt ticket. Yet no one can explain to me where are all the law abiding citizens when criminals are running the neighborhood. Criminals can steal a furnace, major appliances, and a pizza oven from houses and a businesses in our neighborhood in broad daylight. Why, how? Easy answer, criminals take the path of least resistance. If they can easily operate in the neighborhood - they will. They are. It is our job to help make this a safer neighborhood. First, obey the law and demand that laws are vigorously enforced - including minor offenses. Second, secure your house, your car and follow personal safety tips - reduce the target. Third, get involved in the community. I knew a guy that lived in this neighborhood seven years. He could not tell you the name of the school one block away. He never went to community meetings, picked up trash in the neighborhood, met his neighbors - anything. Yet, he was overwhelmed by the crime and lack of the sense of community he enjoyed growing up in another state. Forth, meet the law enforcement officers and find out you can help. Fifth, voice your opinion (but offer solutions).

(#2) I FIND the information on the seat belt incident very interesting in view of the fact that for many years now there HAS AND IS an active open air drug market at 16th and D Streets SE. Why does the police continue to allow this market to operate inspite of the neighborhood complaining for years and years. Until something is done about open air drug markets in the Eastern end of Capital Hill crime will continue as usual. Seems that working on this type of criminal activity takes more work then giving out fines for not wearing a seat belt.

(#3) NO WAY is it a waste of time to have a police officer showing police presence at the intersection of 16th and D SE. 16th St at this intersection has been an Active Drug Market right in the middle of a completely residential neighborhood for several years -- ever since the drug dealers were pushed out of Potomac Gardens. I had heard from a police officer that the police planned to target this drug market to close it down -- your report is evidence that they are doing just that. GREAT!! Sorry you got ticketed for "no seat belt" though.

(#4) I AM the "livid" citizen who wrote in after being ticketed for not being buckled up. I must take exception to two editorial comments made in response to my e-mail letter. Thank you for the opportunity to respond.

a) "Our correspondents sometimes appear to be confused or misinformed...". I am neither confused nor misinformed. I have owned and lived in my home for almost 12 years and I know the neighborhood intimately. At 8:30 in the morning, the corner of 16th & D Streets is virtually ALWAYS peaceful and quiet. It may be a matter of opinion rather than hard and fast fact; however, please refrain from insulting your readers and contributors - it serves no purpose other than to alienate neighbors who participate in positive neighborhood activities and who care enough to voice their opinions about community affairs.

b) " We need to address this issue of our lives being so heavily impacted by a 5th District problem." When we become "us" and "them" rather than "we" our problems don't go away. There are, unfortunately, many shared problems between 1D and 5D. In fact, the very corner mentioned, 15th and Mass., SE is the dividing line between the two police districts. While the prostitutes ply their trade behind, and the drunks fight in front of the long-closed Pierces in 1D, the drug deals are being made directly across the street at S&J in 5D. The "us" and "them" problem extends to the police as well. Officers responding to calls on either side of Massachusetts refuse to deal with the exact problems occurring just across the street because they only want to work in their own respective districts. Meanwhile, officers from either district clearing either corner simply chase loiterers/drug dealers/drunks back and forth across the street ad nauseum.

HOMELESS HOMES

We have had 'homeless' person move into a walkthru 'sidewalk' in the alley boarded by 15th x 16th x C x Mass ave. Is there any legal 'eviction' these days? It is legally alley and is public space. Calls to police so far have not generated any response. Any suggestions?

DANGEROUS INTERSECTION
Back when I first moved to Capitol Hill, arrows painted on the pavement of eastbound North Carolina at Independence showed that the right lane was for right turns only, and that cars in the left lane could turn right or go straight. About a decade ago, the city repaved the street but neglected to repaint the arrows. Cars still turn right in both lanes, but every so often a driver who is unaware of this tradition tries to go straight on North Carolina from the right lane. Over the years, I have observed many near misses at this intersection and once called Harold Brazil's office to see if he could get the city to do something about the problem. I received nothing but an empty promise. The problem remains. Perhaps Ms. Ambrose could take this one on.

SOLID WASTE DUMP
now we have rogue garbage trucks -- big, ugly compactor-type trucks -- that have apparently been disgording their contents in our alley, King's Court. It's an unsighly mess but rather awesome as these things go. It might be well worth the side trip, a three-star pile of trash and garbage, if you are interested in how the quality of life can go to hell in ways you hadn't anticipated. Be forewarned: It can happen to you, too. But better to see it here in our alley than in your yard. By the way, King's Court, which lies between 14th and 15th, C and South Carolina, has delightful artist's studios in the old box factory building, the inspiring Capitol East Community Garden in the northeast corner and now a Vesuvius of trash in the southeast corner. PSA 109 officers were called 5/28 when one of the garbage trucks, a yellow one, appeared -- reportedly without marking or license plates -- but, again reportedly, said they can't do anything unless they see the actual mountain a-building. And, alas, none of us did. So now we've got this mountain .What to do? ... [editor suggests a call to DPW Inspector Colbert, 645-6179]

TREES
One more word on 8th Street Oak trees. Trees all along the 8th, from No Carolina to Pennsylvania Avenue are in bad shape. Some have dead limbs, others have trunks that at deteriorating. It is a major disaster waiting to happen. [editor: Call Amy Mauro at Ambrose office on this one, 727-8072]

SAFETY ALERT--PUBLIC SERVICE
The Kiwanis Club of Capitol Hill, along with nine other Kiwanis clubs in DC and several more in surrounding jurisdictions, has begun providing free of charge, absolutely without strings, car seat safety stickers. They are part of our commitment to Young Children - Priority One. They originally were created by a club near Baltimore after a life crisis arose out of an accident when a very young child and its parent were sent to separate hospitals and no one could find learn anything about the child. The stickers are self adhesive day-glo colors. They are to be applied to the OUTSIDE BACK of children's safety seats. (Don't place them on the sides where they give valuable information to passers-by. Also, don't place them on the inside back, because the emergency crews cannot see them without moving the child - something that could be life threatenting.) The stickers have blanks for filling in the name of the child, parent, address, phone number, other relative to contact, name of child's physician, and special medical needs.

They are already being distributed throughout the neighborhood, so please alert police and Emergency crews of where the stickers may be found if a child in a safety seat is involved in an accident. In addition, we will provide them for distribution to interested day care centers and even for the August police event.

I'm the chairman here on the Hill for this project and have about 1,500 stickers at the ready. I can get more in a blink. Contact me if interested. Thanks. Yours in Kiwanis service. [Ruth Ann Overbeck <raotex@juno.com>]

----------END OF RESIDENTS NEWS----------

Kirsten, Editor

MPD TELEPHONE NUMBERS
Emergency 911
Non emergency 727-1010
1D1 Substation 727-4660
Sgt Parker's voice mail 727-4932 #24426; email address: pp423@aol.com

Capt Alan Dreher 727-4609 or 727-4932 Voice Mail box 34425
1D Commander W. McManus 727-4586
Director of Communications Division 727-4207

PSA 109 Website: http://www.doddsdesign.com/PSA109

HOW TO SEND IN COMMENTS
Just send an email message addressed TO: beat26@aol.com
You can also do this by hitting "reply" on an incoming PSA 109 message. But, we do prefer that you don't send the entire original message back to us. In some email systems this is obvious (the original message gets printed into the reply message and appears on your screen) and other systems it is not. The latter seems to be true of @erols.com. Most email systems can be set to automatically send back the original message with the reply, or not.

OTHER EMAIL LISTS
PSA 106: <psa106@toward.com>
PSA 108: <lorenzo235@aol.com>
PSA 112W (south of E Street, SE): <alrt112w@ricochet.net>

OTHER WEBSITES
PSA 112W: <http://dcfree.net/psa112w/>
PSA 108: <http://crime.washingtondc-online.com>
PSA 511: <http://www.emergencyops.com/PSA511/>
CHAMPS: <http://www.capitolhill.org/>

Camille Barnett's Office: 727-3432
STREET LIGHT REPAIR: 939-7100
STREE CLEANING (Ward 6): Marcella Rodney 727-5895
COMPLAINTS/COMPLIMENTS ON DC SERVICE: Kevin Twine or Andy Crawford. Fax a memo to them at 727-9878.

Total 109

Crime Data PSA 109

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Assualt	Burglary	Theft	Theft- Auto	Stolen Auto	Arson	Total	Cars%Total
Jan -- 1997	1	0	15	1	9	12	26	13	0	77	50.65%
Feb	0	1	2	3	8	9	39	11	2	75	66.67%
Mar	1	1	23	7	7	13	24	8	0	84	38.10%
Apr	1	1	7	3	14	10	28	10	0	74	51.35%
May	0	0	6	4	8	5	22	11	0	56	58.93%
Jun	0	0	8	5	6	8	14	8	0	49	44.90%
Jul	1	0	5	3	17	12	22	13	1	74	47.30%
Aug	2	0	11	1	13	10	21	8	0	66	43.94%
Sep	1	1	7	0	12	6	22	8	0	57	52.63%
Oct	0	0	22	2	17	9	30	11	0	91	45.05%
Nov	0	0	7	2	13	13	33	10	0	78	55.13%
Dec	0	0	10	0	9	7	24	4	0	54	51.85%
Total	7	4	123	31	133	114	305	115	3	835	50.30%
Jan -- 1998	0	0	10	1	6	13	23	11	0	64	53.13%
Feb	0	0	4	2	6	4	19	9	0	44	63.64%
Mar	0	0	14	2	7	4	37	7	0	71	61.97%
Apr	1	0	7	3	19	11	21	12	0	74	44.59%
May	1	0	5	2	16	11	19	7	0	61	42.62%
June	0	0	8	0	28	14	21	10	0	81	38.27%
Change from Prior month	-1	0	3	-2	12	3	2	3	0	20	
Change from same month last year	0	0	0	-5	22	6	7	2	0	32	
Percent Change From Last Year			0.00%	-100.00%	366.67%	75.00%	50.00%	25.00%		65.31%	
Month To Date											
1997 Jan-June	3	3	61	23	52	57	153	61	2	415	
1998 Jan-June	2	0	48	10	82	57	140	56	0	395	
% Change	-33.33%	-100.00%	-21.31%	-56.52%	57.69%	0.00%	-8.50%	-8.20%	-100.00%	-4.82%	

Total 109

Crime Data PSA 109

	Homcide	Rape	Robbery	Assualt	Burglary	Theft	Theft- Auto	Stolen Auto	Arson	Total	Cars%Total
Jan -- 1997	1	0	15	1	9	12	26	13	0	77	50.65%
Feb	0	1	2	3	8	9	39	11	2	75	66.67%
Mar	1	1	23	7	7	13	24	8	0	84	36.10%
Apr	1	1	7	3	14	10	28	10	0	74	51.35%
May	0	0	6	4	8	5	22	11	0	56	58.93%
Jun	0	0	8	5	6	8	14	8	0	49	44.90%
Jul	1	0	5	3	17	12	22	13	1	74	47.30%
Aug	2	0	11	1	13	10	21	8	0	66	43.94%
Sep	1	1	7	0	12	6	22	8	0	57	52.63%
Oct	0	0	22	2	17	9	30	11	0	91	45.05%
Nov	0	0	7	2	13	13	33	10	0	78	55.13%
Dec	0	0	10	0	9	7	24	4	0	54	51.85%
Total	7	4	123	31	133	114	305	115	3	835	50.30%
Jan -- 1998	0	0	10	1	6	13	23	11	0	64	53.13%
Feb	0	0	4	2	6	4	19	9	0	44	63.64%
Mar	0	0	14	2	7	4	37	7	0	71	61.97%
Apr	1	0	7	3	19	11	21	12	0	74	44.59%
May	1	0	5	2	16	11	19	7	0	61	42.62%
June	0	0	8	0	28	14	21	10	0	81	38.27%
Change from Prior month	-1	0	3	-2	12	3	2	3	0	20	
Change from same month last year	0	0	0	-5	22	6	7	2	0	32	
Percent Change From Last Year			0.00%	-100.00%	366.67%	75.00%	50.00%	25.00%		65.31%	
Month To Date											
1997 Jan-June	3	3	61	23	52	57	153	61	2	415	
1998 Jan-June	2	0	48	10	82	57	140	56	0	395	
% Change	-33.33%	-100.00%	-21.31%	-56.52%	57.69%	0.00%	-8.50%	-8.20%	-100.00%	-4.82%	

Pa