Build meaningful police reform

To do so involves looking at a wide range of social services. By Robert R. Friedmann

Recent anti-police protests have brought to the forefront calls for changes in policing. Some demand abolishing the police, detouring in budget to social services, dismantling every police department, and “defunding”-others demand “police reform”-training, and even inner-city police reform. These terms lack a definition, an operational meaning, or a context, measurable as the current forces that drive the term. What problem is, what the solution is, and how will this do, are left to the meaningful perspective of the service recipients and providers. The provision of policing, like health and education, is measured based on the services one receives, instead of the problem that calls for the police. Police are measured on crime figures—not on the services provided in connection with crime. Yet, police are only one element of crime statistics—not the providers of crime. It is important to not only look at the crime itself but also at the relationship with crime and the community as a whole. The reform of the police has been a contentious issue for decades. The 180s of the modern police force have been replaced with different service providers. Several factors have contributed to this shift, including the growth of community policing and the need for more diverse and culturally competent police forces.

Community policing, phase (1880 and on), in the early days of the 20th century, emphasized the importance of community involvement and the need for police officers to be more approachable and accessible to the public. This approach allowed the police to build trust with the community and to better understand the needs of the community. However, as the police force evolved, the emphasis shifted from community involvement to criminal investigations and enforcement. This shift has led to a decrease in community involvement and a decrease in trust between the police and the community.

There are three explicit principles that underlie the community policing approach:

1. Community involvement: Police officers should be actively involved in the community and should work closely with community members to identify and address problems.
2. Crime prevention: Police officers should focus on preventing crime rather than just responding to it.
3. Law enforcement: Police officers should be accountable to the community and should maintain high standards of professionalism and integrity.

We need to move away from focusing on the police and instead, focus on the community and the services that they provide. This shift will allow us to better understand the needs of the community and to build trust between the police and the community.

Mike Luckovich

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

George W. Bush’s eulogy showed constructive class

I am not a George W. Bush fan. In 2000, I voted for Al Gore, and in 2004, I voted for John Kerry. Having said that, the way he handled the 9/11 tragedy was exemplary. The man John Lewis at his funeral—though they were of different political parties, had strong political differences and the congresman boycotted “W’s” inauguration—showed enormous class. This man was tremendously significant at the time when we now have a president in the White House, supported by many in Congress, who is doing everything he can do undo us as a nation.

While “W” was at the funeral to praise John Lewis, his action was a step to help bring us together as a nation. When history is judging “W” 30 years down the road, he will be judged more favorably for this gracious act at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta than why his mistakes led us into war in Iraq.

READERS

Richard C. Wise, Atlanta

Letter wrongly directs benefits of face coverings

With so much public focus on social media spreading potentially false COVID-19 info and misinformation, I am astounded the ACLU would print a letter disputing the validity of studies showing the benefits of masks-wearing. Even if the well-known, documented and widely accepted benefits actually were vague and the evidence insecure, isn’t a “probably minimal at best” benefit better than none? Mask-wearing is not a political statement. It is the patriotic act of voluntarily to protect my fellow Americans. Not wearing a mask is a political statement, choosing radical individual beliefs over social obligation. AlC, can you look forward to letters from flat earthers and space aliens vistitors? I’m sure you get them.

Kurt Oehmke, Atlanta

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