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**Government of the District of Columbia**



**Metropolitan Police Department**

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Testimony of  
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**Chief of Police**

***Public Oversight Hearing on  
the Performance of the  
Metropolitan Police Department***

Committee on Public Safety & the Judiciary  
Tommy Wells, Chair  
Council of the District of Columbia  
February 27, 2013

Council Chamber  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004

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Good morning, Chairman Wells, members of the Committee, and guests. I appreciate this opportunity to update you on the Metropolitan Police Department's many accomplishments over the past year. The full text of my statement will be available on the Department's website at [www.mpd.dc.gov](http://www.mpd.dc.gov).

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As we look back on 2012, I am first and foremost immensely grateful for the hard work, dedication, and courage that the incredible members of the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) displayed day-in and day-out throughout the year. Those are the qualities that allow us to provide members of the community with the highest quality police service that they have come to know and expect from the finest police department in the nation. They are also the qualities that will allow us to continue to face the coming challenges as we embark on a new year.

I am pleased to say that last year, MPD, with the support of our outstanding community partners, continued to make great strides, achieving many milestones and helping Washington, DC, to build upon its growing reputation as a thriving and safe city in which to live and work. Washington is no longer just a weekday-working commuter city. The substantial growth and development of nightlife areas, commercial districts, and residential projects continues to bring more and more customers, tourists, workers, and residents to our great city.

As we all go about our daily work, it is sometimes easy to forget the impact that our officers and civilian employees have on the community. But I remind everyone that our collective effort is what has allowed us to make historic reductions in crime throughout the city during the last several years. We are far removed from the city that was once known mainly for its murder rate. This welcome change has not occurred overnight, but rather is the result of many years of commitment and hard work on the part of the dedicated members of my department and our community partners.

It wasn't long ago that the city suffered from over 400 homicides a year, and sadly, it was not rare for scores of cases to go unsolved, bringing no closure or a sense of justice to the grieving families. Times have certainly changed. We ended 2012 with 88 homicides, a 53 percent reduction since 2008. In four short years, we have reduced homicides by more than half to a level the city has not seen since 1961. This is not just mirroring national trends; Baltimore, Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Oakland, and many other cities have all experienced increases in homicides in 2012. Additionally, our homicide closure rate, 82 percent, was again well above national averages and our officers and detectives are continuing to send the important message that if you choose to take the life of another person, we will find you and hold you accountable.

Another positive trend is that juveniles are becoming less likely to commit homicide, and much less likely to fall victim to homicide. Juvenile homicide offenders decreased 63 percent over the past four years, and juvenile victims decreased 85 percent during the same time frame. It is also promising to see that homicides by gun decreased by 64 percent over the same time period.

While these are all encouraging trends, we will never rest. We continue to work with an even greater sense of resolve and commitment, as we know that even one family grieving the senseless murder of a family member is one too many. Our hard work combating dangerous offenders and illegal guns is not just reflected in the numbers; it can also be felt in the community. Fewer assaults, fewer reports of shots fired, and fewer homicides all mean safer neighborhoods for those who live there.

Our officers' hard work also allowed us to address the tough issue of robbery, especially those in which thieves were targeting cell phones, and in some cases, inflicting significant injuries on their victims. As was seen in other cities around the country, we started the first couple months of 2012 with a nearly 50 percent increase in robberies compared to last year. But, we fought hard to get the offenders off the street, shut-down illegal fencing operations, and even got the cell phone industry to reform their policies and stop allowing the reactivation of stolen phones. With the help of police departments across the country and the leadership of the Federal Communications Commission, we were able to get a solution implemented that will have a world-wide impact. Consumers can now report their stolen phone to their service providers, who will then "blacklist" and "brick" the phone, so criminals can no longer profit from their crimes. Our persistence and determination allowed us to substantially reduce the number of robberies over the last several months of the year so that we finished even compared to the prior year.

While our efforts resulted in positive changes to the cell phone industry, we are continuing to adapt to the ever-changing methods of criminals. We recently identified new and emerging markets through which criminals are receiving money for stolen phones. As a result, we are working to close those avenues to criminals. These efforts will not only help to deter criminals here, but it will also have an impact across the country.

There are many who just talk about the idea of "community policing" as an abstract concept, and then there are those like the dedicated members of MPD, who have been doing it for years, each and every shift, not for accolades or recognition, but from a true commitment to serve.

Members like Officer P.B. Morgan in the Third District. A few weeks ago, I received an email from a member of the community who shared a story about Officer Morgan. Officer Morgan had pulled up in his patrol car to a group of boys outside of a housing complex, where he proceeded to take out a pizza and offer each boy a slice. When the community member inquired, Officer Morgan explained that the pizza was a reward for the boys helping an elderly neighbor.

I also have many examples of dedicated members working around the clock to get dangerous offenders off the street and out of our neighborhoods. If you recall, there were two shocking sexual assault incidents that occurred this past Fall. In the first incident, a man armed with a knife forced his way into the victim's apartment and repeatedly stabbed her after she tried to resist his attempts to sexually assault her. About a week later, in the second incident, a suspect sexually assaulted a victim in her room after threatening her with a knife. Over the course of the exhaustive investigation, members of the Sex Assault Unit, including Lt. Vendette Parker, Sgt. Ronald Reid, Sgt. Scott Guthrie, and Detectives Arthur Leech, Elbert Griffin, Doug Carlson, Derek Bolding, and Alexander MacBean, focused their combined efforts to follow up on multiple leads, canvass neighborhoods, interview witnesses, and work with and care for the two victims. The detectives' dedication and tireless investigative work led to the identification and arrest of a suspect who was charged with both sexual assaults. This is just one example of many in which MPD members, both sworn and civilian, are working day after day to seek justice, solve crimes, hold offenders accountable, and prevent the next crime.

Our continued work in developing relationships with the community is paramount to our success. This summer alone, MPD held over 140 events and activities throughout the city that reached over 19,700 participants, most of whom were youth and families. Over 16,000 residents are able to receive valuable information through our police listservs, and we are able to reach a growing audience through our social media pages, which include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest.

The community has also continued to embrace our text tip initiative. This past year, we received over 2,000 text tips, six times the number of tips we received the year we first launched the system in 2008. Members of the community have continued to provide us with vital information to help us close cases. Our monetary reward payouts this past fiscal year exceeded \$500,000, more than double what we distributed in 2007. These are more than just symbolic numbers; these increases in tips and reward payouts represent actionable information that takes more illegal guns off the street and puts more dangerous offenders behind bars.

This year we continued to leverage technology to create additional efficiencies, including the ways in which the members of the community can seek police services. Last February, we introduced our online police reporting tool, through which residents may submit a report for a variety of non-emergency incidents - such as theft, destruction of property, and other incidents that meet certain criteria. This portal allows residents to more easily report non-emergency incidents to the police and promptly print a copy of the police report. Individuals filed more than 2,300 reports through this new reporting tool in 2012. While we knew it would likely increase the reporting of certain crimes, such as theft, the tool benefits the Department and the city by allowing us to track and efficiently address those incidents in a cost-effective manner and responsibly allocate police resources.

In addition to seeking ways to work efficiently and effectively, our goal is to also serve as good stewards of the city's financial resources. Our comprehensive strategy to address crime in the

city coupled with significant efforts to reduce reliance on overtime hours has led to large savings for District taxpayers. Over the past five fiscal years, MPD has reduced locally funded overtime by a cumulative total of almost 1.2 million hours. This represents a 5-year savings of about \$59 million.

While we accomplished much in 2012, we still have our share of challenges. The year ended with a slight increase in the number of assaults with a dangerous weapon (ADWs). This comes on the heels of four straight years of substantial reductions of ADWs. And while many of these assaults did not result in injury, a significant portion of them were related to domestic violence.

We also saw an increase in the number of sexual assaults, especially those cases in which the suspect was known by the victim. We have conducted significant outreach and educational efforts alongside our partner agencies and community advocates. By analyzing the trends, we have been able to conduct targeted outreach campaigns for nightlife establishments, colleges, and other groups throughout DC. It is well known that sex assault is a significantly under-reported crime, and our partners agree that by providing more information on available resources, victims feel more comfortable coming forward to report their assault.

While burglaries and stolen autos were both down significantly in 2012, some property crimes, especially thefts, continue to pose a challenge. Thefts alone accounted for nearly 62 percent of crime in 2012. The new online reporting tool accounted for some of the increase in thefts, but we will continue efforts to drive down these types of crime. Thefts may not be violent in nature, but they still have a profound effect on the sense of peace and safety in our neighborhoods.

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As we look forward to the coming year, we do so with the understanding that we still have much to accomplish. The sizeable growth of the city requires that we be prepared to face the coming challenges by studying the changing landscape of the city, adapting to those changes by formulating innovative policing strategies, and seeking out the best and brightest to hire as our next generation of officers.

We will continue to work to drive down homicides by building upon our successful framework of action. And while we fought hard to reduce robberies and experienced a sizeable 7 percent reduction in violent crime in the last quarter of 2012, we will continue to implement comprehensive strategies and mobilize our resources in a widespread effort to further reduce crime.

In closing, I would like to thank the members of MPD for their hard work and professionalism during the past year. I am also immensely grateful to our many partners who work with us to help keep our neighborhoods safe and the remarkable residents of the District who inspire our work every day. I look forward to another year of working together and continued progress.