



GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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1. Fear of Crime – Crime Trends

Law Enforcement in the United States is not a monolith; every jurisdiction is different and has their own assets and challenges. Crime in some jurisdictions is up (for example, Indianapolis has suffered a spike in murder rate, unseen since 1998 at a time when police officials are working to fix a problem of being chronically understaffed). The country as a whole, however, has seen improvement in overall crime rate, even as public opinion indicates a perception that the streets are more dangerous than ever. The attached addendum provides data demonstrating the perception of crime in the United States, and as you can see the Fear of Crime remains steady. The overall crime rate has seen a shift downwards in recent years in most jurisdictions, but the public has not reacted as evidenced by their perceptions of crime.

In jurisdictions that have failed to provide the original staffing levels they had obtained in the United States in the 1990's, Crime has increased, as shown in a spike of violent crimes in some of those cities. Baltimore has seen a large spike in violent crime, and other cities have as well. Cities that were declared to be in financial crisis such as Detroit have seen a reduction in force and a significant increase in crime.

The calls for full staffing levels by the public appear to be directly related to high profile crimes, and if the local police association or civic groups provide fact-based information and make it public, this should cause all involved to call for more officers. However, there has not been a significant increase in most of these jurisdictions

Additional resources on this issue from the United States are attached in **Addendum A.**

2. Please describe the influence (if any) the private sector is having on the delivery of police /law enforcement services in your jurisdiction?

This is a complicated issue, and answering the questions as written would require a complete study. Overall, there is increased call for privatization of many services (not just policing) by Conservatives who favor "small government" and more private for-profit industry. There has not been a great deal of unbiased study about whether



or not privatizing actually saves taxpayer money or increases quality of service. Services in other Public Sector areas have seen more privatization than has law enforcement. There has, however, been a move for the past 20 years or so to privatize prisons. There have been numerous horror stories and it appears this move has seen a swing away from private prisons.

Each jurisdiction has had to approach the issue differently due to the unique circumstances and diverse natures of the localities. Where the police association is strong and where collective bargaining laws are strong the local groups have been very successful in slowing the growth of private sector encroachment in to the field of Law Enforcement. In recent years we have turned back challenges to privatize the Pennsylvania Crime Lab, and this was as a result of full political influence of the association and the strength of the collective bargaining agreement.

Additional resources on this issue from the United States are attached in **Addendum B**.

3. Wages, Budgets, and Allocation

All public sector budgets are being slashed, and police are no different. Police departments across the United States have had losses in wages, benefits, and workforce. Entire agencies have been dissolved, with their duties absorbed into already-stressed county or regional forces. Forces that are already accustomed to doing more with less are faced with more and more cuts and greater workloads, as politicians use public safety as a sacrificial lamb to be bled dry whenever they feel they can gain politically by being tough on overspending.

Open positions are often left unfilled; Baltimore, MD (where we had the ICPR Conference in 2012) just announced that they will be permanently eliminating 212 vacant police positions. This sort of attrition has become a popular way to cut costs. Wages, health benefits, and pensions have seen cuts in every state, and new cuts are being proposed every day.

Pension cuts are a constant threat to public employees. While the excesses of corporations and Wall Street caused the economic decline, the same people who caused the crisis have been all too successful at diverting blame to the pension systems for public servants. The pension fight is extremely brutal due to the elimination of defined benefit pensions in the private sector and the rise in popularity of self-contributory plans by employees. There are literally thousands of pension plans in the United States, and each fight is a local fight. The success of maintaining benefits is directly correlated to the strength of the police association and its ability to defeat public referendums and other legislatively proposed cuts. Most plans have been modified in some way, and many of these have been done with the union and the government working together.

Additional resources on this issue from the United States are attached in **Addendum C**.