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of

Kathleen Harrell

President,

**Queen City Lodge #69, Ohio State Lodge
Fraternal Order of Police**

on

“Policy and Oversight”

before the

President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing

30 January 2015

Good morning Commissioner Ramsey, Ms. Robinson and distinguished members of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. I am very pleased to be able to be here with you today to share my experiences with my department and my community during my time as the President of Queen City Lodge #69, representing more than a thousand officers right here in Cincinnati.

In December 2002, the city of Cincinnati, the U.S. Department of Justice, the local FOP, the Ohio ACLU and the Cincinnati Black United Front entered into a Federal collaborative agreement. For the next six years, the "collaborative" as we called it, did a lot of hard work to change the culture of law enforcement in Cincinnati and the image of law enforcement in our great city. Community leaders that spent years bringing lawsuits against our officers became some of our most important allies and the FOP, in turn, took up their goals and objectives as our own.

So how did this happen? From the very start, the Monitor Team and the FOP viewed the situation as unique—a real opportunity to show that law enforcement and the community could come together without resorting to a consent decree and resolve our problems by changing the way we approach policing in our city.

The Independent Monitor's Final Report, which I recommend the Task Force review, explains the unique foundation of collaboration and the challenges of working under both the collaborative agreement and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). I am proud to have been a part of our ultimate success.

Let me first underscore the depth of the FOP's commitment to this process. We held a meeting early on and our membership approved our involvement in this effort and the use of their dues to make sure we could have a representative at the table as the collaborative and MOA took shape. We could have adopted, as our police administrators did at first, a passive role and waited for the results and recommendations to be produced. Instead, we put our money where our mouth is and made sure that we would be an active part of this effort.

At the first Listening Session of the Task Force, our National President Chuck Canterbury said we needed a holistic approach to the issues we've been discussing here today because they are not law enforcement's alone. He also said law enforcement should take the

lead. That is exactly what happened in our city and I believe the collaborative to be a resounding success.

Shortly after my election, I made sure to become a very active participant in the activities of the collaborative. I was the first union president to attend the “all party” meetings with the Federal monitors, mayor’s office staff, ACLU and Black United Front.

There was no question in the mind of anyone in the collaborative that the FOP was committed to the objectives spelled out by the two agreements. In fact, I am pleased that the FOP was on the front line advocating for a lot of the changes and recommendations to our own members, the mayor’s office and the department administrators.

And do you know what happened? The shared goals and the obvious commitment that all of us had to changing the culture and the image of law enforcement in Cincinnati helped establish trust and confidence in one another. We developed mutual respect and admiration because we realized that all of us around that table had the same goal in mind: a better, safer city where ALL of our citizens felt welcome and secure.

The impact of the collaborative, while important, was only the tip of the iceberg. The relationships developed among the FOP, ACLU, Black United Front and other community groups, especially the leaders in our faith community, continue to show how deeply and powerfully we can change our communities if we work together.

In 2009, when our department faced a series of layoffs and reduction in staffing levels, our partners in the collaborative joined us in protesting the decisions to city hall. They helped campaign against the lay off proposals. It is hard to imagine that the groups that spent years suing the department now joined with the rank-and-file to keep officers where they wanted them—in the neighborhoods, protecting their homes.

Later, the then-President of the local NAACP, Christopher Smitherman, sought and won a seat on the city council. He did so with the enthusiastic support and endorsement of the FOP. Now, he is chairman of the Law and Public Safety Committee and one of the most stalwart champions of the rank-and-file officer on the council. He understands the commitment law enforcement has to our city and shares it—just as we knew he would.

During the FOP's effort to turn back Senate Bill 5 which stripped law enforcement and other public employees of many of our collective bargaining rights, our friends from the collaborative were active participants in the referendum effort to overturn the law. With support from nearly 62% of voters, we succeeded.

Having been an active part of this effort, I don't think Cincinnati is necessarily unique. I believe that if law enforcement and the community can get together, get around that table and work through the acrimony and distrust, you can replace it with mutual respect. We all acknowledged that we could do a better job at policing our city. The community leaders came to understand our commitment to the public and their safety just as we grew to understand their commitment to a safer city for all citizens. Once you have a mutual goal and trust in all of your partners, you can achieve whatever you set out to do. Over the course of six years, we did a lot of work together, but, in a sense, the hardest work was done in those early months as we put an end to the mistrust among us.

I am glad to have had the opportunity to discuss my experiences and those of the local FOP with this Task Force. I once again recommend you review the Federal Monitor's Final Report which documents the success we had here in Cincinnati.

I would now be happy to answer any of your questions.