

marcc

“...to forgo the luxury of separate ways when a common path can be found...”

Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati

632 Vine Street, Suite 606
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
Phone 513.721.4843
Fax 513.721.4891
Email marcc@fuse.net
Web www.marcconline.com

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Association of Unity Churches

Baptist Ministers Conference
of Cincinnati and
Vicinity

Cincinnati Conference
(Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America)

Church of the Living God

Cincinnati Islamic Center

Diocese of Southern Ohio
(Episcopal)

Disciples of Christ – SW Ohio

Interdenominational Ministers
Alliance

JCRC of The Jewish Federation

Miami Association (American
Baptists)

Ohio River Valley District
(United Methodist Church)

Presbytery of Cincinnati

Religious Society of Friends

Unitarian Universalist Council
of Greater Cincinnati

United Church of Christ

Volunteers of America
Of Greater Ohio

Rabbi Margaret J. Meyer
President
Tiffany Zents
Vice President
Connie Widmer
Vice President
Nancy Walters
Secretary
Ken Bordwell
Treasurer

Margaret A. Fox
Executive Director
Angela Wright
Office & Technology Manager

March 9, 2015

State of Ohio
Governor's Task Force
Community – Police Relations
Cincinnati Hearing

RE: Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati Statement On Community-Police Relations

Co-Chairs, State Senators and Representative and Appointed Members of the Community
at Large of State of Ohio Governor's Task Force on Community-Police Relations:

Background

The Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati (MARCC) is an interfaith coalition with seventeen denominations that make up its membership. Those denominations represent Jews, Muslims, Protestants, Roman Catholics and Unitarian-Universalists. MARCC works to improve public policies and in the process civil discourse.

The mayor of Cincinnati introduced MARCC to metropolitan Cincinnati on April 4, 1968 at 12 Noon. Then at 4PM that day Dr. Martin Luther King was shot and killed in Memphis, Tennessee. Riots broke out in Cincinnati that evening.

At the time, one of the few connections between local government and the African-American community were the religious leaders of the denominations that were members of MARCC. MARCC brokered, through that leadership and its relationships in both the African-American community and local government, the beginning of what would become a long-standing conversation about racial tension, and advocacy to remedy institutional racism in our metropolitan region.

MARCC's Role

Serious racial disturbances occurred again in 2001. This time the lawsuit ended up in U.S. District Court, Southern District of Ohio, Western Division before Judge Susan Dlott. A Consent Decree was formulated resulting in two agreements: The Memorandum of Agreement addressed the policy changes needed in the Cincinnati Police Department to reduce use of force, and the Collaborative Agreement developed a collaborative community partnering plan for community problem oriented policing.

The six-stage Cincinnati collaborative process began with a focus on goal-setting about future relations between police and community. Judge Dlott oversaw the collaborative process. She appointed Jay Rothman, Ph.D., president of The ARIA Group, as Special Master to conduct this process. MARCC was contacted by Mr. Rothman to

participate as one of the stakeholders. MARCC delegates, representing a cross-section of denominations, were engaged in the effort through focus groups and committees.

In addition to that work, MARCC convened meetings between the Police Chief and African American clergy leadership on a regular basis, and continues to do so as needed. MARCC informed denominations and their congregations about the reforms. MARCC also worked with the Court appointed monitor of the Memorandum of Agreement, Saul Green and his team.

The MOA was fully complied with by Cincinnati Police Department in 2007. MARCC requested a one year extension for the CA so the Cincinnati Police Department could make sufficient progress on the CA goals. MARCC denominational leaders wrote formal statements on why the extension was needed. Other organizations did the same. Those statements were filed with the extension request. Judge Dlott granted the one year extension.

When the one year extension of the CA ended in August 2008, MARCC recommended to City Manager Milton Dohoney that a monitoring group be formed with representatives from a cross-section of the community including the Cincinnati Police Department and attorneys involved in the court cases. The City Manager established the Manager's Advisory Group (MAG), it monitors the CA implementation and continues to meet.

MARCC Recommends

MARCC found the following processes and protocols to be some of the most helpful outcomes from both agreements:

- 1) **Mental Health Protocol Training for Police** – Police Officers need to be trained in particular protocols when approaching or arresting a person with mental health challenges. When officers received this training the use of force and the number of arrests of those persons declines.
- 2) **Use of Tasers** – The use of Tasers instead of guns reduced death by use of force significantly. Yet without specific protocols and training of police officers on how and when to use Tasers, a Taser can become a deadly weapon. The use of Tasers cannot replace the need for on-the-beat policing.
- 3) **Analysis of Crime Data by Police and Community** – Patterns of crime can inform community oriented policing strategies. CPD has incorporated statistical analysis practices due to the MOA. Sufficient resources need to be given to this effort to better equip police and therefore communities for collaborative problem solving.
- 4) **The Citizens Complaint Authority**— The CCA is the way citizens file complaints against police officers for misconduct within an established system of government. The appointed CCA Board consists of citizens, attorneys and investigators. An investigation is done and disposition is made – unfounded, sustained, not sustained, exonerated. The process provides the needed checks and balances on police misconduct and the quality of the citizen complaint. CCA provides thorough investigations, evaluations and shows patterns of misconduct. It is an effective tool that seeks justice and builds trust.

- 5) **Citizens Monitoring Process** – It is critical that a monitoring board be formed representing a cross-section of the community (police, citizens, attorneys, local government) to oversee changes made in any agreement for continual improvement of use of force policies and performance by police, and collaborative community oriented policing.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Margaret J. Meyer
President of MARCC

Margaret A. Fox
Executive Director

Contact: Margaret A. Fox, 513.721.4843 or mafmarcc@fuse.net