

# Ad-hoc Committee on Police and Community Relations

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*Community Forum Public Comments – November 5, 2015*

Lisa Rumor

Thanked the committee, this work is important. Believes that the committee should continue past February. Said we need a police oversight committee and body cameras. Talked about officer not waiting for police backup at shooting scene. What was his training? Also stated that the department needs cultural training.

Pamela - from Mexico City (in Olympia for almost 3 years)

Her experiences with Olympia Police Department have been very positive. Police could better serve me by having a Spanish speaking officer to make contact with me as a crime victim. When you are stressed sometimes it is difficult to remember words in English. There should be at least one officer in the department that has Spanish as their first language. Second, I left with a feeling when I reported my purse taken that they could have done more to follow up on the case. Just felt like we didn't get genuine follow up. What I learned from this was follow up contact even when it is leads exhausted I feel valued. Also, when she heard about the shooting she wondered what kind of training did officer Donald have that led up to the shooting of the suspects. Officers should receive some kind of psychological support.

Rosario (Charo) Portaro – Director at Cielo

Thanked the committee. Has had no bad contacts with the police, but was hesitant to be here. Works with many immigrants at Cielo and as an immigrant we not only have to learn the language, but we have to learn the culture and how to live in this system. Can there be classes for immigrants to be educated so they know what to expect? They want to learn.

Carolina (Hispanic) – Cielo sexual assault center

Thanked the committee and suggests that the convener group should continue. Her experiences with OPD have been positive. She hears from clients that there is a lack of interpretive services when they deal with police, and they don't know how to ask for these services nor are they asked if they would like interpretation. In reality we come from Mexico where we have bad experiences, and we live in fear to report to police because of illegal status. Police can gain trust from this community by understanding that this is a vulnerable community and they need to be understood in their native language, and not assume we are criminals.

Anita -Commissioner for Hispanic affairs

Has not had bad experience with OPD, but I have come across some stories that are heart wrenching. Sometimes undocumented citizens will relay they are afraid of calling police because they are undocumented. Those that have called the police and ended up being gone against instead of the criminal.

Kathy Baros Friedt

Gave a speech about OPD needing change, and said that the council was looking for an analysis from this committee. What protocols for screening incoming veterans? What protocols are there for psychological testing for hiring? What protocols are there for de-escalation? What evaluation was done to find bias? Are there OPD guidelines that govern officer if he or she decides to use force?

Female Hispanic speaker

—called policed when tree went across the power lines—got great response.

Annabel— student at Cielo

She had three encounters with police and they were all positive. 1<sup>st</sup> was domestic violence—police gave me support and called a Sheriff's deputy who spoke Spanish. Gave me information on resources on how I can get further assistance. 2<sup>nd</sup> was a problem with co-worker—police did not speak Spanish, but he called a co-worker who spoke Spanish. 3<sup>rd</sup> time was a language barrier. Even though officer did not speak language he really tried to help me.

15 Minute Break

Reiko introduced the officers in attendance (Leavitt & Sola) and let the group know that they both speak Spanish. She then shared that the committees plan is to also do outreach in pairs in the community.

? Santiago (Hispanic) health counselor

It is important to have many conversations with many people that are not here tonight. Police department should provide training for staff that includes understanding the different cultures. Understanding culture helps understanding how to communicate. We are a very diverse culture even within the Hispanic community. Not everyone comes from Mexico. There should be more than one officer of minority status. The Department should send a clear message to Hispanic community that if they call police and they are undocumented, that they are not going to get in trouble just because of that. They are afraid to call because they don't want to get deported.

Leslie Cushman (White)

Spoke of implicit bias in policing. Recommends that state law on deadly force needs to be changed. Wants internal review process to include outsiders that are picked by the community. Existing OPD use of force policy needs to be revised. Need body cameras now. They will bring better policing and the issues can be worked out later.

Jonathan – born in Ecuador, has been in Olympia for 1 year

Invited the officers present to participate in discussion. Wanted to ask them a few questions. How many officers are there with the Olympia Police Department? (answer from Lt Jelcick, about 67) what do you think the value of these meetings is? (Lt Jelcick stated that this is a time for the officers to listen to the community and not a time for them to take the mic. They get a lot out of hearing the public's stories and can take those with them as reminders when they are out in the field. The officers then returned to their seats)

Warren Carlson (White)

The Police Department should change their name to Police Services. This was done in South Africa and had a great effect on how officers treated the people they came in contact with and even who applied for open positions.

Alejandro Rugarcia - Committee member, Citizen since 2009

Has experience with the Police department both as an immigrant and as a citizen. When he came to this country he was unaware of the cultural differences (gave example of not having car insurance and not realizing that that was a big deal). His experiences weren't always positive, but that wasn't because he was bad. Immigrants don't have an understanding of civics right away. There is a need for the police to educate the immigrant people on what the rules are in this country. How do we ease the fear and heal? Have interactions and education.

Jim Bamberger (White)

Thanked committee and interpreters. Law Enforcement should never put the burden of language barrier on a victim. Always have interpretation available when needed and not through their children or their victimizer. If you want to have good communications you need to be able to speak to the community in their first language.

Alicia Luna (Hispanic) – Lacey resident

Treat me with respect and humility. That is the seed that starts your relationship with the police department. I have never had a run in with the police department. Would like to have an atmosphere at the forum that was smaller and let people have a discussion. You don't need to reach the minority leaders [that are in the room today], you need to reach the "real" community members to hear the true stories.

Regon (white)

Talked about his high school teacher years and how there was a lack of cultural diversity training. Told the same story about his response to lack of diversity based on his response to different races as was shared at the first community forum. Don't carry past negative experiences forward.