

**NOBLE TESTIMONY  
TO BE READ ON OCTOBER 24, 2006  
BEFORE THE  
NEW JERSEY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON POLICE STANDARDS  
BORDENTOWN, NEW JERSEY**

My name is Bryan Morris and I represent the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, NOBLE. NOBLE was formed in 1976 in response to increasing crime and violence rates in communities of color. As black law enforcement, we knew then what is true today: the police can only be effective crime fighters when they have strong community support.

Today, NOBLE represents over 4500 law enforcement executives in 59 chapters across the United States – most of them are police chiefs and executives in local, state, county and federal law enforcement agencies. NOBLE has taken the lead in addressing racial profiling and other issues such as use of force, minority recruitment and hiring. In 2001, NOBLE published its report on racial profiling and developed a training course that has since been provided to thousands of officers across the country.

If you think about it, our members possess the most unique perspective with regard to racial profiling: 1) we are minorities which means we have members that have been victims of racial profiling; 2) we are cops which means we have been trained to engaged in racial profiling, and 3) we are police chiefs and executives which means we are responsible for implementing strategies to prevent racial profiling. This perspective is necessary to temper and balance what are quite often two extreme sides of the racial profiling debate – those who say that racial profiling exist and those that say it does not. Unfortunately, the issue is much more complex.

So, as you can imagine, we were somewhat surprised and very disappointed that a NOBLE member was not appointed to this commission.

Notwithstanding, we commend Governor Corzine on his decision to convene this distinguished panel. To simply lift the consent decree without an independent, comprehensive review by those not involved in the consent decree would cause great community concern and actually tarnish the efforts of the State Police over the past seven years.

After all, the consent decree between the United States Department of Justice and the New Jersey State Police was born from a public outcry denouncing racial profiling by the State Police. It will therefore take an equal level of community support to truly end the consent decree or the perceived need for it.

It would be unfair not to acknowledge the accomplishments of the State Police, the Department of Justice, the Monitors and the Attorney Generals Office of State Police Affairs under the direction of Deputy Attorney General Desha Jackson in complying with the consent decree. Much improvement has been made. However, our concern is not limited to technical compliance of the consent decree. We do not believe that this is the only gauge. The real core issue is CHANGE and the real gauge is community satisfaction.

As you evaluate the State Police your review must therefore delve deep into the heart and soul of the organization to identify if there have been real changes in the culture of the State Police and its operating systems. For example, what steps have the State Police taken or recommended to continue independent monitoring of its activities? The answer to this question is extremely revealing.

If the goal of the State Police is to simply end the consent decree and the oversight it provides, the community must ask why the organization would oppose oversight. Has the State Police recommended continued data collection and analysis? If the State Police wants to end data collection, this would suggest the culture remains the same. If they continue data collection and analysis, have they identified how it will be incorporated into the core operational systems of the organization? Has the State Police changed its attitude and actions with regard to community complaints? Are all complaints embraced, investigated and adjudicated in a timely manner? To answer this question you may need to review actual internal investigations and talk to complainants.

You should also take a hard look at the department's early intervention system. How was it implemented? What type of intervention is provided? Has it been effective? To better answer this question, you need to review the files of officers who have been disciplined or terminated over the past three years to identify if whether there were clear warning signals that should have been identified by management.

You must talk to the officers to ascertain their true understanding of racial profiling and identify if they truly believe it to be wrong, or are they just doing what is necessary to comply with the consent decree. You must also talk to the union and review the types of grievances filed over the past few years. In other words, are they (union) fighting change and protecting officers to the extent it prevents accountability, or have they embraced the reforms and partnered with management to better serve the community.

You must talk to crime victims and even suspects to evaluate their treatment. Most of all, you must review the core operating systems to ensure the State Police have implemented industry best practices.

You must also identify what efforts beyond those outlined in the consent decree the State Police has taken to improve police and minority community relations? Has the diversity of the State Police, at all levels of the Department improved? If not, why? If it has, what steps will the State Police take to ensure these measures continue? What assurances does the community have that the efforts and gains over the past seven years will not be lost in the next seven years?

State Police Superintendents and Governors come and go, but the need for the State Police to maintain good community relations remains constant. The fact that so many want to extend the consent decree, even in light of the accomplishments of the State Police, serves as an outcry for continued change. It is not necessarily a cry for the past or even a cry for the present; it is a cry for the future. The consent decree has given many minorities hope and the State Police a “second chance” to garner their support and confidence. However, a second chance is not a new opportunity to repeat the mistakes of the past. This commission must provide recommendations to prevent the mistakes of the past that not only impact the State Police but the entire law enforcement profession. We ask that you keep that in mind. Place politics and personal agendas to the side, and provide recommendations that will reinforce the effective, ethical policing, and serve as a model for all police agencies to follow.