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Honors English 3

Mr.Harrison

05/26/16   The Police: Can they be trusted?

    Sirens whaling, children crying, people are dead. Another deadly shooting by the police. In

America, the police have been here for the last century, they have been helping and also hurting

the community at the same time. With race issues, to trust issues, can we really trust these people

to do what they are supposed to do? And when they are in the wrong does complaining really

help anyone? Or will they continue to break the law, and lose the trust of the American people?

Allegations can be taken seriously or as a joke, but with the current fad for bashing police, and

cops abusing power at an all time high, will it ever change? Educating the public, new

technologies, re-evaluation of rules for police, and rebuilding of trust should help address

allegations of police officers abusing their power.

    When education is brought up, I'm talking about the education of American citizens. Most

Americans should know their rights and when it's right to make certain allegations. For some

reason America is dumbing down. If school education is the issue that's different, but what if this

problem comes from the government. Do they want American citizens to be in the dark, or just

not to know what's taking place in the police department? It's not hard to tell right from wrong,

but what about the people who truly don't know? What does a person do when they are

mistreated or don't know their rights in certain situations? Who do they complain to? The cop

that did it and isn't listening? Many people don't know what to do, and end up shrugging it off,

and in the end loose respect for cops in general. So how do we fix this? Educate the public. If

more people in the community were educated they would know when to complain, and when not to complain. They wouldn't complain just because they feel that they are being targeted as a race, sex, or orientation. People would complain because of rightful cause, not just because they hate the police. Most people in a community don't know of the services provided by their law enforcement agency's, so that's why NCPC (national crime prevention council) exists. Their goal is for "Law enforcement outreach programs to educate residents about police activities and increase community support for law enforcement and prevention." ("Educating residents") They run a newsletter called *Police beat* which provides information to the community about new laws or regulations concerning their community. It is written and edited by local police officers and is completely free. This establishes a connection between the police and the community, which in the end builds trust and appreciation. "By complaining, even about minor matters such as rudeness, you give senior officers the opportunity to give a message about what is acceptable and professional. You also give those officers a message about what the community regards as acceptable from the force they manage."(Urban75 "police complaints") This shows that the police really do care how people regard them, and care to repair the trust they once had.

New technologies are proving that nowadays it's getting harder and harder to get away with things. Body cameras are a great way of proving situations, and minimizing police abuse. When a officer knows they are being recorded they were less likely to commit any offenses. According to "Aljazeera America" body cams were first introduced in 2012, around the time Travyon Martin, an unarmed African American was killed. This situation brought to light more race issues and use of force issues concerning police. An officer named Gary Cunningham was the first in

the country to have his officers wear the body cams he says, "The results were remarkable. The department saw an 88 percent decline in complaints against officers and use-of-force incidents plummeted 60 percent." (Dina Demetrius) This is just one of many reasons why body cameras help society in the reduction of police offenses.

Where does all the evidence go? It all costs money. Most police departments today use a system called TASER which isn't cheap. "WOMACK: So I'm an officer. At the end of the day, I'm wearing a body camera. I unclip it from my uniform and I walk up to the evidence.com doc and I plug it in. But there's so much police video now - body cams, dash cams, cameras in the interview rooms - that Womack says police departments shouldn't have to handle all that by themselves." (Martin Kaste) The entire process costs about 25 to 30 dollars per officer per month, and is rising. Police officers using this system and putting money into it shows that they are proving to the public that they are here to protect us and the law.

Rules are put in place for a reason, and as time goes on the rules need to changed with the changing of time. In most recent times with police brutality, race issues, and overall mistrust of police, the state of Washington has decided to do something different. They put groups of police officers in training camps to test their physical and emotional abilities to encourage their abilities to be used for good. ""For the past three years, every police recruit in the state has undergone this style of training at the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, where officials are determined to produce "guardians of democracy" who serve and protect instead of "warriors" who conquer and control."(Kimberly Kindy) But this is no ordinary training facility, "Gone is the

military-boot-camp atmosphere. Gone are the field exercises focused on using fists and weapons to batter suspects into submission. Gone, too, is a classroom poster that once warned recruits that "officers killed in the line of duty use less force than their peers." (Kimberly Kindy) They encourage using their words before their weapons in summary. This type of training is slowly but surely moving its way throughout Washington, and hopefully the entire United States.

Respect is something that everyone deserves. No matter race, color, sex, or orientation everyone deserves to give respect and receive it. In the public eye police were respected, looked up to, and saved the day. But in recent times that image is being compromised. There has been an ongoing race war, mostly between African Americans and White Americans. Yes, I agree that there has definitely been situations with cops where race has been an issue and has ended in death. But for the people out there that just hate cops for either being white, black, or just being a cop is the real problem, an example of those people is "black lives matter", "black panthers", and even the present day "KKK". The groups drags out in what they believe to be wrongful in the eyes of the law even though they don't sit in on the court cases, and don't witness the testimony. They only hear what the media is saying which is all biased. And when an indictment doesn't go as expected they loot, and that doesn't prove anything. It just shows that people will ruin their own lives and others to show that they are mad, but won't do anything legal to try and change anything. I alone can't fix this problem, and I really don't know how. I know that the best way to start is with the police to show that they show no favoritism, and change the way they are trained. I think that's where it should start. There will always be good cops and bad cops, but lately there's more bad than good. "Granted, police make mistakes. And there have been

instances in the United States of police abusing power . Those are exceptions and shouldn't diminish the desire to maintain robust forces whose members' foremost goal is to honorably serve and protect." (Wilkes Bare) The publics view of police is diminishing, but with rightful cause. That's why so many departments around the country are trying new ways to show the community that they can be trusted, and all they want in return is to be trusted and respected.

In conclusion, educating the public,new technologies, re-evaluation of rules for police, and rebuilding of trust should help address allegations of police officers abusing their power. It's a recognized issue, and that's the first step in solving a problem. This issue is bigger than a few people trying to make a difference, something needs to be done on a national level. So can the police be trusted? It's up for you to decide whether making these changes all throughout the country makes a difference or not. Congress needs to seriously get together and figure out how to solve this problem before they lose this country to something that could be fixed.

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