



Joint Committee on Transparent Policing and Use of Force Reform

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Speaker Notes

- I am the first author of a new guidebook for police entitled *Policing Protests: Lessons from the Occupy Movement, Ferguson, and Beyond*. It is available at the link below:
<https://www.hfg.org/policingprotests.htm>
- My talk today provides a brief summary of the recommended approaches from the guidebook.
- We do not currently have an effective training apparatus in the United States to prepare police officers on how to handle protests. Most of the relevant training focuses on riot *response tactics* rather than riot *prevention strategies*.
- Moreover, U.S. police do not appear to have a clear understanding of the constitutional issues associated with how they handle protests. Police often engage in unconstitutional practices when managing crowds.
- Research shows that when police rely on overly aggressive or undifferentiated responses to protests, they promote anger, defiance, and rebellion within the crowd. This often has the effect of increasing violent and destructive behavior rather than decreasing it.
- As in any relationship, there is a complex dynamic between police and crowds. Inappropriate behavior from either side can escalate the situation.
- We must adopt evidence-based approaches that protect our officers from threats to their safety, while also respecting the constitutional rights and safety of crowd members.
- Our recommended approach contains four elements:
 1. *Education* – know who is coming and why
 2. *Facilitation* – facilitate their First Amendment rights
 3. *Communication* – communicate with them regularly before, during, and after the event
 4. *Differentiation* – do not take enforcement action against people behaving lawfully
- Adopting these approaches will reduce unnecessary conflict and violence as well as the community's vulnerability to civil rights lawsuits.