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LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITMENT CRISIS: WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

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M.S. in Leadership

Fall 2022

Granite State College

Who Am I

- Student in the Leadership Program at GSC
- Captain at the Salem, NH Police Department
- Police Officer in NH for over 25 years
- Currently the Operations Support Bureau Commander overseeing investigations, prosecution, records, and am the agency PIO.
- Bachelors Degree in CJ from Granite State College

The Problem

- Law enforcement is experiencing a problem nationwide in finding enough qualified candidates to fill open positions.
- While law enforcement is struggling to retain current personnel.
- Dramatic increases in violent crime over the past several years.



The Causes

Research has shown the following causes:

- Reduction in traditional pipelines to law enforcement careers (e.g., Boy Scouts of America, Police Explorers, ex-military personnel, etc.)
- Fewer multi-generational police families.
- Increase in diagnosed PTSD in military personnel who served during the War on Terror

The Causes Continued

- Reduction in number of qualified candidates due to loss of stigma attached to misconduct:
 - Young adults up to age 23 now have a 41% higher likelihood of a non-traffic-related criminal arrest.
 - Drug disqualifications a contributing factor in hiring issues facing law enforcement.
- Studies show members of the millennial generation are less likely to work in the public sector compared to older generations.

The Causes Continued

- The recruitment and hiring processes.
 - Absence of support, lack of clarity, and the complicated nature of hiring/background process leads to dropouts.



Lack of Clarity

Lack of Focus

Lack of Discipline

Lack of Engagement

The Causes Continued

- Negative political and media attacks on law enforcement
 - During research I could not locate any peer-reviewed literature on political & media attacks affect on law enforcement recruiting.
 - Despite repeated claims otherwise, in the media and by politicians, there is peer-reviewed literature debunking claims of “overpolicing” in urban areas.

Solutions

- Potentially lower or change some standards such as tattoo policies, marijuana use, physical requirements, or educational requirements may increase applicant pool.
 - New Hampshire rather recently removed the bench press requirement for new hires at PSTC. It also added a category for persons in their seventies to finish the 1.5 mile run.



Solutions Continued

- Change the recruitment process
 - Simplify the application and selection process
 - Embrace technology
 - Providing a more personal experience to the potential candidate. Must maintain constant contact.

Solutions Continued

- Law Enforcement agencies must actively recruit qualified candidates.
 - Highlight public service to new generation.
 - Create positions or teams focused on recruitment while potentially holding constant hiring processes

Solutions Continued

- Law Enforcement must actively confront false narratives and outright lies.
 - This may require news hijacking or using a media conference on another matter to issue a condemnation.



Conclusion

- Law Enforcement agencies must focus on the recruitment issue and find ways to bring in more qualified candidates. This will require changing the methods of recruitment and hiring that were once effective.

Questions?

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