

March 30, 2020

President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice,

As leaders of the nation's largest association of academic criminologists, we are very much interested in the work of the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. Our members have done significant work over many years on most of the subjects being studied by the Commission, and we would be glad to provide any assistance that you may find helpful.

We first want to call your attention to the fact that our society sponsored a major project in 2017-2018 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of President Lyndon Johnson's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice. We had more than a dozen experts review what the LBJ Commission did, assess research on the subjects of its work over the past half-century and discuss what a similar modern-day commission might do. The results were published in 2018 in the journal Criminology & Public Policy, and can be seen here: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17459133/17/2>

We hope that in doing your work, the Commission ensures that its conclusions are backed by scientific evidence. Over many decades, much policy and many practices in this field that have proved ineffective have been based on anecdotes and conclusions reached by public officials and others who have not viewed the latest and most reliable evidence. There has been much progress on this front, as exemplified in the Justice Department's own CrimeSolutions.gov website.

We strongly urge the Commission to review its work carefully in this regard so that the public can be assured that its conclusions are well founded. We would be glad to hear from the Commission any questions you have about the many subjects you are considering on which our members have conducted research.

The Executive Board of the American Society of Criminology