

Promoting Civility in Times of Heightened Partisanship & Polarization

**Cal Cities City Managers Department
Annual Conference
February 3, 2021**



Dialogue and Dilemma

93%

Believe incivility is a problem

Civility in America 2019

68%

Believe incivility is a crisis

Civility in America 2019

74%

Expect **incivility** to get **worse**

Civility in America 2019

68%

**Political incivility deters
qualified people from working
in public service**

Civility in America 2019

The Role Institutions Should Play in Helping to Improve Civility

- **Elected Officials** **64% Larger Role**
- **Media** **59% Larger Role**
- **Federal Govt** **59% Larger Role**
- **Public Schools** **58% Larger Role**
- **State/Local Govt** **57% Larger Role**
- **Social Media Co** **57% Larger Role**

Civility in America 2019

Incivility Happens...

Why It Happens:

- **Sense of entitlement**
- **Egotism**
- **Anger, fear**
- **Isolation**
- **Lack of restraint-no filter**
- **Lack of social & economic equity**

What Makes It Happen:

- **Lack of trust**
- **Delayed decisions, incorrect decisions, instability**
- **Deteriorating relationships**
- **Not being heard**
- **Winners and losers**
- **Lack of response from trusted institutions**

Engagement Builds Civility

- **Collaborations:** people working together toward common vision and goals
- **Ideas:** without fear of being dismissed or ridiculed, people can be more open to supporting new ideas for improving situations
- **Satisfaction:** when the public works together with elected leaders and staff, they can realize greater community cohesiveness

Strategies to Find Common Ground

- **Identify and Set Aside Personal Biases.**
- **Commit to Seek Agreement, Progress and Solutions.**
- **Listen First to Learn Perspectives and Experiences.**
- **Don't Assume, Seek to Understand Motives and Intentions.**
- **Seek Outcomes All Can Live With But Don't Compromise Principles.**

Strategies to Find Common Ground cont.

- **Accept That Good People May Disagree.**
- **Use and Accept Facts.**
- **Stay Respectful.**
- **Focus on the Issue, Not the Person or People.**
- **De-Escalate Hostile Situations.**
- **Be Courageous.**

Best Practices That Work

- **Be Human First**
- **Lay the Groundwork**
- **Practice the Dialogue**
- **Reflect on the Dialogue**
- **Consider a Code of Conduct**
- **Leadership Training**

Thank You

The logo for Renne Public Law Group (RPLG) features the letters "RPLG" in a bold, blue, serif font, centered within a white rectangular box.

Renne Public Law Group®

The background of the slide is a photograph of a classical building with white columns and a pediment, set against a blue sky with light clouds. The title "Fresno Commission on Police Reform (FCPR)" is centered in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Fresno Commission on Police Reform (FCPR)

February 3, 2021

Precipitating Events

- On May 31, 2020, following the killing of George Floyd, more than 3,000 individuals marched from the Fresno police headquarters to Fresno City Hall in a protest organized by Fresno State NAACP



WE DEMAND:

- Our Mayor-elect, Jerry Dyer, acknowledge the research backed disparities for what they are and cease explanations based on personal opinion or perspective of said issues. This feeds into negative stereotypes and stigmas, specifically those that refer to Black and Brown people.
- Community involvement in the hiring process of a new police chief, there must be community members in the hiring committee and they must receive a vote.
- The Fresno Police Department officially charge Officer Christopher Martinez and Officer R. Loza who brutalized London Wallace and Sgt. Ray Villalvazo who shot 16-year-old Isiah Murrietta-Golding in the back of his head.
- The complaint on the Fresno Police Dept.'s pattern and practice of shooting individuals, which the community filed in October, be addressed; it has not been responded to by the US Attorney, nor has the County District Attorney been charged or convicted of any of the repeat shooters. (e.g. Isiah Murrietta-Golding)
- Elimination of qualified immunity for cops and establishment of police bond; they should be treated as any other individual committing a crime.
- An explanation of the strategy for firing racist police officers.
- Elected officials inform the community on their process of deciding Fresno's budget and what next year's financing will look like, including transparency about West Fresno support specifically.
- MANDATORY non-violence training for any officers responding in the Fresno Community.
- Establishment of a more diverse police force that will reflect our communities; cops should live in Fresno if they want to work for Fresno.
- Stricter regulation for industrial plants; they should not be allowed to expose the Black community to their toxins!

We The People Demand Justice.

FCPR Overview

- The Fresno City Council created the Fresno Commission for Police Reform (CPR) to develop recommendations related to police reform and community safety:
 - Chair and Co-Chair with different perspectives
 - 40 members selected from the community
 - 90-day timeline
 - 4 Subcommittees
 - Police Budget;
 - Community Input;
 - Community Development; and
 - Police Training, Tactics, Policies, and Philosophy (PTTP)

The Outcome

- 73 Recommendations that fall (generally) in the following categories:
 - Police Oversight
 - Recruitment, Hiring, and Promotion
 - Use of Force
 - Police Culture, Morale, and Standards of Conduct
 - Police Budget
 - Response to calls with a mental/behavioral health component
 - Community-Based Prevention Efforts
- Beyond the development of recommendations, the CPR was intended to be a process of community reconciliation
 - Fresno evolved into a diverse, but geographically split community with a disproportionate number of people of color living in Central, West, and South Fresno.

What Worked:

- Be sure the issue under discussion is potentially amenable to facts
- Establish guard rails including rules of engagement and strong moderators
- Make room for members to discuss context and root causes of issue – historical, economic, societal, lived experience
- Aim for balance in the composition of commission members – including in leadership positions
- Make time for public and behind the scenes check-ins with key players
- Use reliable, objective information, experts, and polling
- Maintain transparency
- Set short and long-term goals
- Discussion should be focused on publishing recommendations
- Institute a clear end date – short but not unreasonable