

Diversity in Policing

Panel Conversation & Public Dialogue

Monday, May 2nd, 2022, 1-2:30pm via zoom webinar

Law enforcement in the US has never reflected the racial, ethnic or gender diversity of communities they serve. Racial and ethnic diversity is especially non-representative in cities with historically high rates of minorities. This is true in Connecticut, where the 8 largest cities have a combined white population of less than 50 percent and yet the forces are nearly 75% white. What is the benefit of demographic diversity in policing? What about ideological and disability diversity as well? The Police Transparency Task Force's final report provided several recommendations aimed at improving diversity within Connecticut's law enforcement community. This conversation will highlight those recommendations in the context of the national conversation.

Moderator

Andrew Brown, Investigative Reporter, CT Mirror

Panelists

Dr. Anne Kringen, Austin Police Department

Dr. Lorenzo M. Boyd, Police - Community Relations Expert

Ivonne Roman, Retired Police Chief, Newark NJ

Jonathon Slifka, Executive Assistant to the Commissioner- Dept. of Aging & Disability Services

Sgt. Steve Austin, Hartford Police Department

Chief Vernon Riddick, Chief of Police West Hartford, CT

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Dr. Anne Kringen



Anne Li Kringen, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Criminal Justice at the University of New Haven where she has served as both Assistant Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice and the Assistant Dean of the Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences. Her personal research focuses on policing, specifically organizational issues that affect diversification. An evidence-based policy advocate, she seeks to conduct research that bridges the gap between critical perspectives on race and gender in policing through policy change.

Her recent research includes isolating policy factors that limit female representation in law enforcement agencies, considering the impact of civil service rules and agency-specific hiring guidelines on women and individuals of color, developing an evidence-based process that increases the recruitment and retention of diverse candidates, and understanding the impact of academy training on diversification efforts. Her work has been published in *Gender, Work, and Organization*, *Feminist Criminology*, *Criminal Justice Policy Review* and *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*.

Dr. Kringen has conducted multiple large-scale evaluations for major metropolitan law enforcement agencies and for the Bureau of Justice Assistance. She has been a discussant at the National Institute of Justice and has briefed U.S. Congress about challenges to diversification in law enforcement. She currently serves on the Research Advisory Committee for the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Dr. Kringen received her Ph.D. in criminal justice from Texas State University. She proudly served as a peace officer in Alexandria, VA making her a well-rounded, intelligent choice. In 2021, the Austin, Texas Police Department welcomed Dr. Kringen to the department as the new APD Training Academy Division Manager. In APD, Dr. Kringen will play a significant role in revising the APD police cadet program as part of the reimaging public safety process.

Dr. Lorenzo M. Boyd



Dr. Lorenzo M. Boyd, is a nationally recognized expert in police-community relations and an authority on urban policing. Dr. Boyd currently serves as the Stewart Professor of Criminal Justice and Community Policing at the University of New Haven. He formerly served as the university's Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion and former Director of the Center for Advanced Policing. His 14 year service as a deputy sheriff in Boston informs his 20-year career in higher education. He effectively translates research and theory into practice, making him a sought-after consultant, trainer, and speaker for departments and communities across the country.

Dr. Boyd conducts professional development training with a central focus on building levels of empathy, lived experience, and cultural competence among police personnel. He works with police leaders around the country to determine training needs and develops interactive professional development sessions that include real-life scenarios and role play.

Dr. Boyd regularly appears on local, regional, national, and international media outlets to discuss policing in the aftermath of high-profile cases. Dr. Boyd is the former president of the Academy of Criminal Justice Science and a life member of National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives. He earned his doctorate from Northeastern University. He also holds a master's and bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts.

Sgt. Steve Austin



A true native son of the City of Hartford. He was born, raised and attended Hartford public Schools, graduating from Weaver High School and the then Greater Hartford Community College. Prior to joining the Hartford Police Department, Sergeant Austin was employed in the Family business "Austin Telecommunications & Electrical Services" which had offices in Ct. and New York. In 1995 He started his own Company Touchstone Associates LLC which counted as customers most of the larger retail stores and automotive dealerships in Ct. and Western MA. Looking for greater challenges and a better way to impact the Hartford community that he loves, he joined the Hartford Police Department as a recruit in 2004. Upon graduation from the Police academy Sergeant Austin was assigned to a walk beat in the neighborhoods of his youth the Northeast sections of Hartford. It was here that he began to build new community relationships and strengthen existing ones with business owners, local clergy, residents that knew him from his time as a youth as well as the new generation of children that lived and played in the neighborhoods that he served.

In 2013 Sgt. Austin was assigned to the Hartford Shooting Task Force before being promoted to the rank of Sergeant and reassigned to the Special Operations Group by Chief James Rovella. In June of 2013 Sgt. Austin was given the task of assisting in the implementation of "Project Longevity" in the City Of Hartford. Project Longevity is a "National Gun Violence Reduction Initiative" that has been implemented in every major city in the United States. As a part of this initiative Sgt. Austin has worked hand in hand with many Federal and State Law Enforcement agencies including the US Dept. Of Justice, US Attorney's Office, The CT. State's Attorney's Office, FBI, DEA, ATF, CT. State Police, the Bridgeport and New Haven Police departments. In 2018 Sgt. Austin was assigned to head the Community Response Unit, until his most recent assignment as the supervisor in the Career Development Division.

As part of the community and social service side of "Project Longevity" Sgt. Austin has collaborated with Yale University, University Of New Haven and John Jay College of Criminal Justice as well many community and Faith based organizations in the City of Hartford. It was during the community aspect that he was able to work in partnership with organizations such as the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Hartford Communities That Care, Wilson Gray YMCA, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford, Compass Youth Collaborative, the NAACP of Greater Hartford, Mothers United Against Violence and the Faith Based Initiative. Helping to plan and implement community events, dialogues, and conversations that have led to a better relationship between the Hartford Police Department and the community that they serve. Sgt. Austin believes it is through vision, transparency and openness that will allow our 21st Century Community policing model to continue to thrive, move forward, and build a spirit of collaboration and true partnership. Most important Sgt. Austin always strives to be a positive role model for youth and adults, encouraging them to be the change they would like to see in their lives, and their community.

Sgt. Austin is a husband to his wife Dhalma and proud father of three children, two beautiful daughters Chelsea & Brea and his handsome son Deven. He enjoys basketball, football and has a strong passion for Big Game Sport fishing that he shared with his late brother James. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the "Open Hearth Men's Shelter" as well the "Greater Hartford Salvation Army". He is also an active participant and mentor with the Hartford Police PAL and Police Explorers. A social science buff, he can often be found reading the latest articles on our changing society in his spare time.

Ivonne Roman



Ivonne Roman has 25 years of experience in policing, serving in every rank from police officer to police chief, in the Newark (NJ) Police Department.

Roman earned a Master of Public Administration with Distinction in 2017 and a Master of Science in Public Affairs and Public Policy in 2020 from Rutgers-Camden, and has completed coursework for a PhD in the Public Affairs/Policy Department. She holds certifications from the Police Executive Research Forum, the Harvard Kennedy School and Rutgers-Labor Relations program.

She has served on the board of the American Society for Evidence-Based Policing since 2017 and is an executive fellow at the National Police Foundation. She was awarded a National Institute of Justice (NIJ) Law Enforcement Advancing Data and Science (LEADS) scholarship (2016), Women in Media scholarship (2020) and the American Society of Criminology Outstanding Practitioner Award (2019).

She was a journalism intern at the Marshall Project (2018). She was awarded a 2019 TED Talks fellowship for her advocacy work to improve outcomes for women in policing. In March 2021, Roman and Maureen McGough of the NYU Policing Project co-founded the 30x30 initiative to increase the representation of women in policing to 30% by 2030, and now have over 150 partnering police agencies.

Jonathon Slifka



Jonathon Slifka currently serves as Executive Assistant to the Commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services. He also serves as the Chair of the Improving Police Interactions with the Disability Community sub-committee of the Task Force. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Communications from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, North Carolina.

In his previous role, Jonathan was appointed by Governor Dannel P. Malloy as the Governor's Liaison to the Disability Community, a cabinet-level position and first position of its kind in the history of the state. During his time in that role, he helped create and oversee a working group on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities as well as re-vitalizing the Governor's Committee on Employment for Persons with Disabilities. In addition, he helped push through several key pieces of legislation including the introduction of a new symbol of access in the state as well as updating language within state statutes with person-first language with respect to the disability community.

Mr. Slifka was one of the first students with a disability mainstreamed through the West Hartford Public School System, was the first player with a disability to play in the West Hartford Little League and was the first student in a wheelchair to play on a high school tennis team in West Hartford.

A current resident of West Hartford, Mr. Slifka previously served as the Chair of the West Hartford Democratic Town Committee as well as a former member of the West Hartford Advisory Commission for Persons with Disabilities. He continues to serve in several voluntary roles to advocate for persons with disabilities including a founding member of the Board of Directors of the Miracle League of Connecticut and a member of the Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force for the Playhouse on Park in West Hartford.

Chief Vernon Riddick



Chief Vernon L. Riddick Jr. was born and raised in Waterbury and is a graduate of the John F. Kennedy High School. He went on to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from Tufts University in Boston. He also attended Rutgers University Law School and has earned his Master's Degree in Public Administration from Post University in Waterbury.

Chief Riddick began his law enforcement career in 1993 as a police officer in Ansonia, CT. In December of 1994 he was hired by the Waterbury Police Department. He was initially assigned to the Patrol Division where he served as a Field Training Officer. In January of 2000, he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant and assigned as a supervisor in the Patrol Division. In May 2004, he was promoted to Lieutenant and was assigned to the Internal Affairs Division. In July 2006, he was promoted to the rank of Captain and served as the evening shift patrol commander. In November of 2009, Vernon was promoted to Deputy Chief and was placed in charge of Administration. In January of 2013, he was appointed Acting Chief of Police and in October of 2013 he was promoted to Chief of Police. During his tenure he worked to build and maintain strong ties between the police department and all communities within the city, increase the use of technology for greater efficiency, and worked with the City's Human Resources on successful minority recruitment drives in an effort to make the department more reflective of the city's diversity.

Chief Riddick was heavily involved in the revitalization of the Waterbury Police Activities League (PAL), previously volunteering his time as a coach for girls' softball and basketball. He has also volunteered for many other community and civic activities. These include, but are not limited to, neighborhood cleanups, assisting with clothing drives, holiday dinners, and other events for the needy, driving his church van to pick up congregants for various activities, mentoring local youth, and transporting residents from the local shelter to church for free breakfasts. He serves as a deacon at Greater Joy & Truth Ministries.

In May of 2018, Chief Riddick retired from the Waterbury Police Department after 24 years of service. However, his law enforcement career continues as he was hired on May 29, 2019 as Chief of the West Hartford Police Department. He and his management team have reorganized the police department, created specialized units, revamped the hiring process, streamlined the field-training program, and utilized technology to improve crime prevention strategies and community outreach.

In addition to his formal education, Chief Riddick is a graduate of the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association's Command Institute (LEEDA); Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute of Police (SMIP); and the 79th session of the Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar (LEEDS). He has successfully completed numerous classes in police management and operations. He is a former squad leader and subsequent commander of the Waterbury Police Department's Emergency Response Team, a former executive board member of the Waterbury Police Union and was a certified police instructor for the State of Connecticut. He is the immediate past vice president and current executive board member of the Waterbury Police Activity League (PAL), and a board member of Holy Land USA. He previously served on the Governor's Commission on Youth and Urban Violence, and Wellmore Behavioral Health board of directors.

Chief Riddick is a Vice-President of the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association (CPCA). He was recently reappointed to the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POSTC), which oversees training and certification for all municipal police officers in the State of Connecticut. He also serves as President for the Connecticut Chapter of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). Lastly, he is an adjunct faculty member at the University of New Haven.

Chief Riddick is humbled to have received dozens of awards and honors throughout his career. Most recently, in 2019, he was selected as the African American Mayor for the day in the City of Waterbury, and in 2021, the NAACP again named him one of the 100 Most Influential Blacks in Connecticut. Chief Riddick and his wife, Sandy, are in their 22nd year of marriage and have a blended family of six children and grandchildren.

Moderator, Andrew Brown



Andrew joined CT Mirror as an investigative reporter in July 2021. Prior to moving to Connecticut, Andrew was a reporter at newspapers in North Dakota, West Virginia and most recently South Carolina. He's covered business, utilities, environmental issues, the opioid crisis, local government and two state legislatures.