



# NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

JONATHAN F. THOMPSON  
Executive Director

November 18, 2015

The Honorable Loretta J Lynch  
Attorney General of the United States  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-001

Richard Lowry  
Editor of National Review  
215 Lexington Avenue  
New York, New York 10016  
letters@nationalreview.com

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) has represented the public safety and law enforcement interests of our nation's 3,081 Sheriffs for over seventy-five years. From the beginning of the first Office of Sheriff in America some 350 years ago, our nation's Sheriffs have been actively engaged in community policing by providing public safety to local communities throughout the United States of America.

Today, I write to express our deep concerns regarding perceived misconceptions expressed in a September 30, 2015 speech by Principal Deputy Attorney General Vanita Gupta on the topic of community policing at a recent summit in New Jersey. Throughout her remarks, Ms. Gupta continually espoused the supposedly growing mistrust that currently exists between law enforcement and community members who "do not see each other with enough empathy," and the concept of "us vs. them when in fact law enforcement and the community should be one and the same." While NSA does not agree with Ms. Gupta's assessment that police-community trust needs to be rebuilt, we do agree that a primary mission of state and local law enforcement is to create healthy community policing relationships which are "not just a civil rights priority, but a public safety and officer safety priority."

Finally, the speech failed to address the growing burden placed on state and local law enforcement by society and the federal government to perform societal tasks that are not, nor have they ever been, considered a primary mission of community policing. Clearly, community policing is only one essential part of the broader societal study of inequity in America. Without adequate funding by all levels of government, state and local law enforcement cannot adequately train, equip, and compensate local law enforcement personnel who serve and protect their local communities each and every day. As noted in the *National Review* on October 12, 2015, "The DOJ is Wrong: Cops and Criminal Are Not Morally Equivalent," there is a growing hostile trend being exhibited by the federal government against state and local law enforcement in our nation's local communities. By laying our society's ongoing

racial and discriminatory ills and practices primarily at the feet of state and local law enforcement agencies, the federal government does not do justice in addressing our nation's very real criminal justice problems, including the overcrowding of our nation's jails and prisons; the lack of medical and mental illness treatment provided to inmates; promoting the perception of rampant excessive force by state and local law enforcement; allegations of unreasonably harsh sentencing policies of minorities due to race, color or equality; the lack of a coherent national immigration policy; the alleged discriminatory treatment of minorities when confronted by law enforcement; etc.

The National Sheriffs' Association submits that all individual Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs take official oaths to enforce and to administer the law according to the United States Constitution and in accordance with applicable state constitutions in providing equal protection under the law to every person.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan F. Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Jonathan F. Thompson