

Commission on Racial Equity and Justice
Listening Session #1: Community Conversation
Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau, Host
July 20, 2020

Held virtually via Zoom

Participants

This listening session, hosted by Senator Oletha Faust-Goudeau, was with community leaders from the Wichita area, including religious, educational, business, and nonprofit leaders.

Topics Discussed

How have you and your community been impacted by racial inequity, particularly around policing and law enforcement?

What steps should the state of Kansas take to address racial inequity and injustice, particularly around policing and law enforcement?

Primary themes were increasing transparency and accountability within law enforcement; improving relationships between the police and the community; and working to offer mental health response instead of or alongside officers when dispatched. Other items discussed:

- Unnecessarily punitive traffic citations – cause people to get caught in a cycle of owing fines/fees they can't pay, further punishments
- Increase diversity within law enforcement agencies
- Sensitivity and implicit bias training
- Black communities aren't being listened to, always last in line when there are needs.
- Transparency within policing; statewide reporting/database for excessive use of force information; KORA exemptions related to excessive force
- Body cameras and policies that ensure they are recording at the appropriate time
- No knock warrants – dangerous for both citizens and officers
- Mental health funding and dispatching mental health professionals on 911 calls
- Qualified immunity
- Evictions and homeownership
- Education and internet access
- Police-community relationships and lack of consequences for bad behavior

- Economic development
- Fear between the community and police
- Drivers license suspensions
- Importance of preventing gang violence
- Civil asset forfeiture
- Racial profiling
- Citizens review board and powers
- Interaction between various law enforcement agencies and information for the public on the jurisdictions
- Fathering classes and resources for single fathers
- Use of force policy on state and city level
- Training for officers and discipline/penalties for bad behavior
- Decriminalization of marijuana
- Post-incarceration voting rights
- Remove the slavery exception in the 13th amendment for punishment for a crime
- Funding of public defenders
- School resource officers