



Baltimore City Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge #3

Gene Ryan
President

Lisa Riha
Secretary

January 4, 2017

Dear Mr. Rector,

This is our response to your recent article in the Baltimore Sun dated 1/2/17, "Baltimore Police say they're prioritizing beat cops, officers who live in the city- but numbers have dropped'.

In this article, Baltimore Police spokesman T.J. Smith incorrectly stated that the BPD "has limitations on how it can fill shifts based on its collective bargaining agreement with the police union." In truth, as outlined in the current labor contract, BPD command is solely responsible for the allocation of personnel and the number of personnel assigned to individual units, including their roles and responsibilities.

During the last contract negotiation between the City and the FOP, the City (to include Police Command) requested the current Patrol work schedule of 4 days on/3 days off, for a 4 day/10-hour shift configuration. It was stipulated, and agreed upon, that the Department needed 1250 Patrol Officers, working in Patrol cars, to staff the daily shifts. This number was not to include specialized District units, such as Operations and Drug Enforcement; nor, did it include Officers on extended medical leave or suspension. This required number was never reached by the Department and has continued to drop significantly.

The numbers that were quoted in your article were supplied by the BPD in the annually required "Response to House Bill 771 Baltimore Police Department – Report on Community Policing". In that report, Commissioner Kevin Davis states the following:

As of 12/1/16, 999 officers were in patrol out of 1255 or 79.6% staffed

As of 11/1/15, 1,102 officers were in patrol out of 1,271 or 87% staffed

However, the actual numbers published by the BPD via a Patrol Staffing report dated 12/14/16 are:

1067 officers are assigned to Patrol Districts, citywide. Of the 1067 officers, only 860 are assigned to Sector Patrol. Of the 860, 160 are not in a full duty job status. **This leaves the actual number of officers**

performing Sector Patrol at ONLY 700, citywide, as cited in their own staffing report. This is a far cry from the numbers reported by the BPD on January 1, 2017.

In this same article, BPD spokesman J.T. Smith also reported that the Department had to redeploy Officers to deal with violent crime. He said it recently quadrupled the number of robbery Detectives. In the past, there were 24 Detectives working robbery cases from the DDU, Robbery and City Wide Robbery units. The newly formed Robbery Unit, in actuality, has 45 Detectives working cases; a far cry from the 100 Detectives that would be required if the number had honestly been quadrupled.

The FOP regularly hears numbers, issued by the BPD, that don't always reflect reality, but have chosen not to address them so as to avoid a war of words over inaccurate propaganda. However, now we must say that **enough is enough**. We can no longer avoid a response when both our active members, and the citizens of Baltimore, are at such great risk. Our members are required to work many more hours over their normal 10-hour shifts in order to maintain basic Patrol staffing levels which are far lower than any professional law enforcement organization would ever consider even remotely adequate. This is a dire situation in terms of the operational safety of our Officers and can no longer be tolerated.

Equally as critical, however, is the risk that is being absorbed by our already fearful community. The few Officers that are working the various District shifts are only able to respond to calls for service with no time left for proactive policing of any nature. As a result, crime rises, due in great part to the fact that the criminal element of our community is fully aware that our low staffing numbers make us inefficient. Our members can only do so much and, at this point, the Baltimore Police Department is at the tipping point of being unable to protect the City and its citizens.

The rank and file feel as though they are severely understaffed and under attack from all sides, including from within the command ranks of the BPD. Currently there are upwards of 200-300 officers that could retire in 2017 and it is no secret that the BPD has become a training ground for police recruits intent on leaving for better paying agencies that put greater importance on operational safety and employee support. There are law enforcement agencies who regularly attempt to recruit our Trainees and sworn members and, in many cases, have been successful. It is imperative that the Baltimore Police Department hire qualified officers with a sense of urgency. If the city fails to make this job appealing both financially and by improving working conditions, in an expeditious manner, the situation that we have described will only worsen.

We urge Mayor Pugh and the Baltimore City Council to require that Commissioner Davis take swift action to rectify the current Patrol staffing levels of the Baltimore Police Department before the City faces a critical inability to provide basic police protection to its citizens.

Respectfully,

Lt. Gene Ryan
President