



# NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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## **Sheriff John R. Layton's Oral Remarks on Behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association**

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm John Layton, Sheriff of Marion County, Indiana, and it is my distinct honor to be with you here today.

I want to start off by thanking the Task Force for holding this listening session. These forums are critical in helping provide the public with insights and experience from the perspectives of Sheriffs.

I am speaking here today on behalf of the National Sheriffs' Association which represents the more than 3,000 elected sheriffs nationwide. As you may recall from previous testimony, sheriffs are the only democratically-elected law enforcement leaders in the country and each sheriff serves as the chief law enforcement officer in his or her respective county or parish. Sheriffs are directly accountable to their communities and, as such, give us a unique perspective on the needs those communities.

Education is a key component for every sheriff's office. We begin educating our deputies in the academy and continue that education throughout their careers. Sheriffs are not exempt from education and we participate in a range of seminars, workshops, trainings, and conferences to continually enhance our ability to be effective leaders.

The cornerstone of that education is the National Sheriffs' Institute (NSI) which was developed in the early 1970s as the foundation for first-term sheriffs and has continued to change in response to the needs of those sheriffs and the communities they serve. The NSI was first developed with federal funding through a partnership between the National Sheriffs' Association and the University of Southern California. Since 1993, it has been housed in the National Institute of Corrections Jails Division and cosponsored by NSA and NIC.

Concepts at NSI are taught in the context of their relationship to effective leadership and the sheriff's ability to achieve his or her leadership direction. Over a week-long intensive course, first-term sheriffs examine topics such as "The Sheriff as Leader," "Ethics," "The External Environment and the Office of Sheriff," "Leading Change," and "Defining Your Leadership Direction." Each topic is explored in depth to address direct and practical challenges a sheriff may face at home and discussion is led by NIC staff, NSA staff and expert instructors.

For example, in the module on "The External Environment and the Office of Sheriff," first-time sheriffs explore public partnerships, identification of critical stakeholders, steps to establishing partnerships with those stakeholders, relationships with the media, and the partnership between the sheriff's office and the funding authority. Each of these discussions is critical in helping a first-time sheriff understand the enormous responsibilities to his or her community. NSI graduates all over the country will tell you that this module and others uniquely prepared them to better serve their communities. From better media relations to reducing budgetary constraints, NSI has proven an invaluable resource to our nation's sheriffs.

Personally, for this Sheriff, the NSI was invaluable in preparing me as a freshman Sheriff. Workshops, exchanging of ideas, professional instructions and an in depth study of historical successes of the Sheriffs who have gone before me, were paramount in my accomplishments thus far. During NSI, I personally networked with Sheriffs who either ran or had utilized a Sheriffs' Ranch in their county or state. For those not familiar with the concept, a Sheriffs' Ranch is a facility that fosters youth mentoring and interaction in an outdoor camp situation. In the training, we discussed many helpful ideas concerning fundraising, organizing a volunteer corps and even the pitfalls related to developing a Sheriffs' Ranch. I was able document and build upon those ideas and begin the process of developing a Sheriffs Ranch in Indiana. Now I am the Chairman of the Indiana Sheriffs Ranch committee and it will become a reality in just a few months.

In addition to the education offered to first-time sheriffs at NSI, the National Sheriffs' Association provides all sheriffs with the opportunity to participate in seminars and workshops annually at its conferences. At our 2014 Annual Conference in Fort Worth last June, NSA offered more than 100 seminars on topics ranging from active shooter training to inmate communication technology to reducing line of duty deaths to keeping our seniors safe. My time today does not allow me to go in depth on any of those topics nor is it an exhaustive list of all the areas in which education and training is ongoing for every Sheriff and sheriff's office. However, I hope that this very small sampling of topics helps this Task Force to remember the vast knowledge we much equip each Sheriff and deputy with to protect him or her on the street. Sheriffs, and the law enforcement community as a whole, rely on our training to ensure that we are prepared for any of the thousands of unique calls for service we receive each and every day.

Again, I thank the Task Force for allowing me to speak on this important topic today. I hope that events like this listening session will lead to more regular and open discussions between law enforcement leaders across the country and policymakers in DC. I look forward to any questions you may have.