

GRAND JURY REPORT
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2014

The members of the January-February 2014 Grand Jury would like to express our great thanks to Judge Atkins, Lynn Pryor, Tara Bozell and the rest of the Kentucky Commonwealth Attorney's Office for their help explaining the legal process to our group of novice court officers. All the cases were well prepared: demonstrating the professionalism of the prosecutors and assistant attorneys working behind the scenes, keeping the process moving quickly and efficiently.

Though our tenure of service has been short, we have noticed some trends that should be addressed by our community:

Repeat offenders are creating drag and cost to the legal system. The Courts are reprocessing the same individuals again and again. The drug problem in Christian County is far greater than the jurors realized. Working K-9s are very useful for protecting police officers and detecting drugs. Attempted or actual break-ins of residences are on the rise.

Families often enable youth misbehavior; but, gang activity and conflict starts when children are young and often progresses in seriousness as they become teens and young adults. The key to stopping offenders is to invest in youth intervention programs. The money can be spent on prevention with six to twelve years old or on incarcerating them after they get older. The battle must be won between youth education versus gang induction; for once they are exposed to casual violence, an attitude of "No fear, don't care" may take over. Older gang members do not pass on to the youth a message of restraint after learning lessons the hard way, and many of them end up in jail or dead.

Our community's law enforcement and court officers are trying their best to treat the public fairly and professionally. The attitude of this group of Grand Jurors has changed from a sense of annoyance to a new appreciation for the usefulness of stops for minor traffic violations as a means of detecting serious felony conduct.

We jurors are honored to serve our community, but feel there should be greater consequences to citizens who ignore jury duty. Nothing happens to candidates who do not return their questionnaire, though contempt of court is mentioned. The problem will persist so long as the Courts continue to work around absenteeism by borrowing jurors from other divisions. We don't seek cruel enforcement irrespective of hardships, just a fair sharing of civic duty when able.

During our term of service, the jury members have gained a greater appreciation for our neighbors who serve the community in the judicial system and in law enforcement. We have heard many humorous and frightening stories about what goes on across town or just down the block. We leave with a greater awareness of our community and sense of purpose in choosing its direction.

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