

REPORT FROM CHRISTIAN COUNTY GRAND JURY

JAN-FEB 2013

As members of this Grand Jury, most serving for the first time, we have had our eyes opened to many facets of our population and community. It seems to us that crime in our city and county is in near-epidemic proportions and that our law enforcement officers, judicial system, and jails face an ever-increasing challenge of dealing with the onslaught of offenders that commit these crimes.

We have observed through looking at the cases brought before us that drug abuse and trafficking seem to be related to the majority of the crimes committed in Hopkinsville/ Christian County. In many cases, drug use, drug procurement, or protection of drug turf can be determined to be the direct cause of the crime. Secondly, even if the drugs and or usage had no direct bearing on the type of crime committed, involved persons were found to be in possession of illegal drugs.

We respectfully suggest to City and County governments that additional monies be approved to fund the war on drugs and to make a more aggressive effort to end the import of drugs into our community. Our police are understaffed and, in our opinion, need more officers to address this problem. We further suggest to the courts that harsher punishment is needed so that criminals are not back on the streets so soon after incarceration. Perhaps more stringent rehabilitation is needed to encourage offenders to leave the drug culture that seems to be running rampant in our community. There is a need for a facility to house and rehabilitate men such as the Trilogy Center does for women. Jail and/or prison only exacerbate the problem.

During our term, we were also made aware of the widespread abuse of food stamps, not only in our county, but across the state. It would be a much more effective program and a much more widely accepted program IF the abuses could be greatly reduced, preferably on the front end.

In a separate area, we would like to commend the efforts of our Child Support Enforcement Department. They are being tenacious in applying the cutting edge practices only used by one other department in Kentucky. This is the practice of putting the offender's name on a national crime information list. If an accused non-supporting parent gets as much as a speeding ticket anywhere in the U.S., he/she can be extradited to Christian County to answer these charges.

We appreciated the dramatic presentation by Deputy Noisworthy of the Christian County Sheriff's Office on gangs in Hopkinsville. While we don't have the problem that large metro areas have, we do believe a Christian County Gang Unit is needed, and that these officers are remaining informed, alert and engaged.

We also believe that all of the law enforcement officers, special agents, and officers of the court that protect our population are a very dedicated and professional group of individuals of which all citizens should be proud.

Thanks for letting us serve and do our civic duty!

Foreperson

Date