

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2010 GRAND JURY REPORT

This report concluding the service of the November-December 2010 Christian County Grand Jury is presented with the intent to describe the collective experience we jurors shared during the term, to communicate our impressions of the performance of our local law enforcement agencies and officers, and to comment on what we conclude to be our most pressing local issues based on the cases considered during our term. The report is by no means all-inclusive, but it does relate topics and conclusions agreed to by consensus.

Our Shared Experience

First and foremost, we can say without hesitation that we feel the Grand Jury was truly representative of Christian County in its makeup. The perspectives, knowledge, experiences and individual contributions of each juror were critical to our deliberations. It was both reassuring and rewarding to perform our duty with the confidence that each juror would be heard. We carried out our responsibility to the commonwealth with due consideration to the gravity of the offenses brought before us, and did so with unity of effort.

Local Law Enforcement

During the term of the Grand Jury, we had the opportunity to closely interact with and observe members of the Commonwealth Attorney's office, the Christian County Sheriff's Department, the Hopkinsville Police Department, the Oak Grove Police Department, and several state agencies. In each instance we found dedicated professionals.

The Commonwealth Attorney and her assistants were extremely helpful in matters of process, law and reason. As counsel Lynn Pryor facilitated our workload efficiently, represented the commonwealth effectively, and advised us wisely whenever a question arose.

It is evident that our local law enforcement officers face daunting, and often dangerous, tasks in the execution of their duties. Our appreciation for their efforts is substantial. We do ask that leaders within the various departments continue to emphasize that to those in whom much authority and power is placed, much is expected.

Pressing Local Issues

The types and number of cases presented to the Grand Jury provided clear evidence to support conclusions as to what issues are of ongoing importance to the safety and security of Christian County's citizens. Our conclusions are almost certainly no different than those reached by other juries, but bear repeating in order to provide ongoing feedback to lawmakers and law enforcers.

The most pervasive destructive influence facing our community is the manufacture, distribution, or use of methamphetamine or crack cocaine. Those activities ultimately destroy the lives of those involved and their families. Also clear is that a significant amount of burglaries and thefts are being committed by those addicted and by those feeding addiction. Continued and increased emphasis on eradicating harmful drugs from our streets is warranted.

Organized gang activity is violent at its core; the frequency of gang-related crime increases while the age of offenders decreases. We recognize this ongoing threat to local security and support efforts to decrease gang influence.

Additionally, the members of the Grand Jury were struck by the frequency and seriousness of criminal child abuse. Defenseless and powerless children should continue to receive the fullest protection of the law, and offenders should be aggressively prosecuted.

The Grand Jury considered charges resulting from the investigation into results obtained from the audit of the Christian County Jail through 2007. One indictment was returned as a result.

Foreperson
December 17, 2010