

October 30, 2009

Honorable Lynn Pryor
Commonwealth's Attorney
Third Judicial Circuit

The September and October 2009 session of the Christian County Grand Jury has concluded its term of service and offers this report in summation of its actions and observations. Our report covers acknowledgements of praise and admiration on several fronts and offers concerns for other items which appear to be a growing concern for our county. We also will join other members of previous Grand Juries and continue to express concern for juror's service with respect to their compensation.

The Grand Jury has the highest respect for our law enforcement officers who serve our county. These men and women from agencies across the county and regional and state agencies who serve and protect our citizens have shown clearly that our protection is their focus. Each day they serve us in situations that are often above and beyond the call of duty to enforce our laws and protect our citizens. Our law enforcement personnel serve us with a commitment most of us are not capable of making. We honor our officers for their willingness to protect our interest and if necessary, give their lives. We are humbled by their work and would ask all our employing agencies to make choices that keep a high level of protection on our behalf and encourage our government to increase their pay even at the expense of sacrificing other services.

The Grand Jury wishes to express it's gratitude to Commonwealth Attorney Lynn Pryor and staff for their obvious dedication to our community and commitment to the law. The work of the office of the Commonwealth Attorney is often taken for granted but serves the citizenry on their behalf with great respect for its citizens, their safety, and the rule of law. The dedication and commitment were evident from the beginning day when great care was given to train the

Grand Jury. It was stressed that we were an independent body, acting on behalf of our citizens to return a True Bill if the Jury believed the legal standard was met. Through this process we have learned much. It has become apparent to us all that the case load handled by our Commonwealth Attorney and our court system is overwhelming. We find that their efforts are to be applauded and we commend them for their service to our community.

We have returned True Bills on behalf of the citizens of our county covering a broad spectrum of violations of our statutes. None were more piercing to our sense of duty than those that have involved the loss of life, the threat to life, and endangerment and abuse of our children. While these indictments were delivered with disturbing concerns, none have deepened our commitment to the continued pursuit of law and order than those indictments returned related to the possession, manufacture, and trafficking of illegal and prescription drugs. It has become evident to us based on the number of cases related to the illegal drug trade, that it is on the increase and threatens larger and deeper segments of our community. The influx of cocaine, heroine, and marijuana, coupled with the manufacture of methamphetamine and its sale, should be cause for alarm throughout our county. Efforts by law enforcement agencies to combat this influx consume a good portion of their time but with greater concern are the criminal elements that appear to be coming common place. This certainly includes the rapidly growing numbers of our young people embracing gang affiliations. The continued efforts by law enforcement must continue but our legislature must revise our statutes to assist their efforts. Tougher sentences for these offenders, modification in the laws related to possession, and continued work by the drug courts can lead to a more effective method to deal with this undesirable element that is growing in our community and across the state. We ask the legislature to act swiftly to help local governments deal with this growing concern.

We also wish to thank the employers who have sacrificed, even while in compliance with law, to allow their employees to serve their community through service on petit and grand juries. We acknowledge that while many jurors are compensated by their employer and jurors are treated most fairly, other jurors truly sacrifice by serving their community with little compensation. Again we thank those employers who can offer compensation. At the same time, we ask our county and state government to fairly compensate jury service worthy of the work that is performed. While we are grateful for the privilege to serve, and do so out of our sense of civic virtue, fairness under the law also applies to the side of the law that insures the rule of law.

Respectfully,

Mike Beck, Grand Jury Foreman