

Grand Jury Report
January-February 2008

On behalf of the January-February Grand Jurors, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the court for this educational experience. As a group, we were amazed and surprised at the diversity of the cases that we heard. Commonwealth's Attorney Lynn Pryor and her staff did an excellent job in helping us understand the law as it applied to these cases. They also took the time to listen to our suggestions and make changes as needed. There were several issues that we felt needed to be addressed to this experience.

The first issue of concern to us was the dismantling of Hopkinsville Police Department's Street Crimes Unit. We asked to see the gang presentation, and were amazed to find out the level of gang activity in our community. As citizens, we are concerned that the gang issue and unlawful activity will increase without officers specializing in this area. Of course we understand that there is a shortage of officers in our community. What can be done to find the money to increase our police staff?

The second issue that caught us off guard was the degree of shoplifting in our community. We heard a few cases in which officers had shoplifters and the store's merchandise in their custody, and then the store chose not to prosecute. One of these stores is Lowe's. Since prices rise and consumers have to pay extra when these crimes occur, this just seems unacceptable. We would like to see a mandate that does make shoplifters pay for their crimes.

The last area that we would like to address is the issue of prescription medication and the use of the KASPER report. We realize that patients will doctor shop to get their drugs. We also understand that they will pharmacy shop so they will not get caught. If the physicians and pharmacists would utilize this KASPER report each time they prescribe Schedules II and III medications, this abuse could be decreased dramatically.

Again, we would like to stress what an eye-opening experience this was for this Grand Jury, it was a pleasure for all of us to serve.

Thanks also to Judge Atkins for his support.

FOREPERSON