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What is the Role of Policing in Fostering Democracy "by the people for the people?"

On a day like today we should reflect on a very important date in American history. 158 years ago today on November 19th Lincoln gave one of the greatest speeches in recorded history. He concluded his speech with the famous phrase "government of the people, for the people, by the people''. This short phrase perfectly summarizes what it is our country stands for. A place where people can live freely without fear under the protection of their rights. The police were entrusted with the duty of maintaining peace and harmony in our society. On paper it works perfectly, it's a great system but it has one major flaw. People don't understand that it can't work if society doesn't comprehend that police are included in that society. And if we as a people, including police, don't understand that democracies need to evolve then this great democracy that our founding fathers envisioned will surely fall.

The police are the most visible manifestation of government authority. And if the police often fail, why should we be asked to believe in democracy? A strong relationship of mutual trust between police and community is the key to a society where democracy can be realized to its full potential. A community where that trust is absent is proven to have more acts of police misconduct and police brutality. And according to a study by the Federation of American Scientists, a community where 39% of police officers have a history of using force makes the remaining officers up to as much as 26% more likely to use force as well.

On the other hand, we need to understand that just like the police have failed with their duty we as a community have too. The reflection of the society that we have today begins with the violence that happens within family members. Parents need to comprehend that it is on their hands to create a society with less violence, less racism and with more tolerant people. If they take up this responsibility our communities would definitely be different. The police as well as the community have both had their faults. We need to stop playing the blame game. Police need to stop judging the community and saying that their force is justified for the situation that they are in just as much as the community needs to stop believing that the police as a whole is a cruel entity with the sole purpose of making our lives worse.

If we all understand that the phrase "by the people for the people" is something that Abraham Lincoln said to unify us and not divide us. If we all understand that this phrase demonstrates that we are all the same. Just people with a different role in this big democratic system where you can exercise your rights under the constitution's protection, then that will be a step in the right direction. If we all shared the responsibility of protecting our countries' principles we wouldn't feel as if we were in a competition to see who has the most power.

Nevertheless, this would all be much easier if police understood their crucial role in fostering democracy. Police should encourage the promotion of a stronger nation where the protection of humanities rights is upheld. The police should be a model whose exemplary actions are something to strive for.

Police should promote unity to facilitate the participation of civilians in a community where we can all recognize that we are responsible for maintaining a strong and secure country where we can live in peace and harmony. Having the capability of acknowledging that our democracy needs to constantly evolve and adapt to the constant changes we are seeing in our country is what will create a well-founded democracy.

Works Cited

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