

# IACP



# NEWS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **IACP and the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Release the Report of the National Summit on Wrongful Convictions: Building a Systemic Approach to Prevent Wrongful Convictions**

**Alexandria, VA** – On December 3, 2013, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP), and the Innocence Project joined forces to announce the release of the report of the National Summit on Wrongful Convictions: Building a Systemic Approach to Prevent Wrongful Convictions.

The Summit report was a result of a National Summit on Wrongful Convictions that the IACP held in conjunction with OJP in 2012. The Summit gathered 75 subject matter experts from all key disciplines to address and examine the causes of and solutions to wrongful convictions across the entire spectrum of the justice system.

The report includes 30 recommendations for making rightful arrests, correcting wrongful arrests, leveraging technology and forensic science, and re-examining closed cases. The Summit report lays a foundation for required changes in investigative protocols, policies, training, supervision, and assessment.

"This groundbreaking report lays out a strategy for law enforcement to take a leadership role in preventing and responding to wrongful convictions," said Chief Walter McNeil, Quincy, Florida, Police Department and past IACP President. "Through this report, law enforcement will gain a better understanding of how to overcome challenges, rethink and improve the investigative process, and promote stronger communication by everyone across the entire justice continuum."

"This report identifies ways that law enforcement can lead collective problem-solving and positive change in our justice system, rather than focusing on fault-finding" said Karol V. Mason, Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Justice Programs. "I commend the IACP for their leadership in issuing this report and developing a number of forward-thinking recommendations to build a systemic approach to preventing wrongful convictions by reducing the potential for error and offering ideas on how practitioners, scientists and policymakers can guard against these miscarriages of justice."

"We also commend the IACP for its leadership in championing these important reforms that protect the innocent and enhance the ability of law enforcement to apprehend the guilty," said Barry Scheck, Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Innocence Project. "We've learned from the 311 DNA exonerations that some police practices, especially with regard to identification procedures and interrogations, can and should be improved to eliminate bias and suggestion. Having the world's largest police organization's backing these reforms will have a tremendous impact on getting agencies nationwide to embrace these improved procedures."

Jennifer Thompson, a victim advocate and a strong believer in judicial reform also attended the report's release. She recounted her own experience of a brutal rape she suffered as a twenty-two year old college student and her compelling testimony that sent a young man to a life term in prison for a crime he did not commit. "After being part of the judicial system for thirty years, I am thrilled and hopeful that the protocols and best practices outlined in the report are going to be implemented," said Jennifer Thompson. "When our judicial system fails, and someone is wrongfully convicted, there are no winners, only losers. These recommendations protect not only innocent suspects but crimes now and in the future."

A copy of the complete report can be found by visiting the Bureau of Justice Assistance website at [www.bja.gov/Publications/IACP-Wrongful Convictions Summit Report.pdf](http://www.bja.gov/Publications/IACP-Wrongful_Convictions_Summit_Report.pdf) or the IACP's website [http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/Wrongful Convictions Summit Report WEB.pdf](http://www.theiacp.org/portals/0/pdfs/Wrongful_Convictions_Summit_Report_WEB.pdf). This project was supported by a grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

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### **About the IACP**

*The International Association of Chiefs of Police is a dynamic organization that serves as the professional voice of law enforcement. Building on our past success, the IACP addresses cutting edge issues confronting law enforcement through advocacy, programs and research, as well as training and other professional services. IACP is a comprehensive professional organization that supports the law enforcement leaders of today and develops the leaders of tomorrow.*

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