



Anchorage  
Police  
Department  
Employees  
Association

PO Box 230330  
Anchorage, Alaska 99523  
(907) 561-7500  
[www.apdea.org](http://www.apdea.org)

March 27, 2015

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the discussions regarding public safety in Anchorage.

My name is Jeff Bell. I am the Vice President of the Anchorage Police Department's Employees Association. I have been a police officer at the Anchorage Police Department for 19 years. I have worked in patrol, SWAT, Special Assignment Unit (SAU), FBI's Safe Streets Task Force, U.S. Marshals Fugitive Task Force, and the Crimes Against Children Unit.

I was asked to address the current crime situation in Anchorage. I'm going to give you the perspective of someone who has actually watched the Anchorage Police Department be forced from a "proactive" approach to crime fighting to a "reactive" response to calls from our citizens.

I recently went to each of our detective units and spoke with many of our officers and detectives regarding the current crisis in Anchorage. I can tell you that all of us can tell that there is increased crime in Anchorage, not only do we see it and hear about it on the news, but we see it unfold in front of us.

So far this year, Anchorage has seen 33 shootings and 10 adult homicides; all of the homicides are believed to be drug related. In 7 of the homicides Marijuana was the primary drug associated; 4 of the homicides occurred during "drug rip" scenarios where during sales attempts one party murdered the other, 2 of those were Marijuana drug sales.

While we will never be able to stop every shooting or homicide, we can be more "proactive" in our identification, monitoring and enforcement of our most violent criminals. This used to be the practice at the Anchorage Police Department; unfortunately due to the current staffing shortage this is no longer a priority.

I'd like to address the units that are responsible for these types of investigations at the Anchorage Police Department. The Anchorage Police Department has two main units that investigate drugs. The VICE unit is responsible for long-term drug investigations; it currently consists of 4 detectives and a Supervisor. In 2010 the VICE unit had 11 detectives/officers, 2 supervisors and a commander running two shifts. The Special Assignment Unit is responsible for lower street level drug investigations and all gang related investigations. The Special Assignment Unit currently consists of 5 officers, a supervisor and a commander. In 2010 the special Assignment Unit had 14 officers, a supervisor and a commander.

Both of these units have been reduced to an ineffective and unsafe staffing level. The current "TASK FORCE" is basically the combination of what's left of these two units. Drug crimes DO NOT get reported; they are almost entirely officer-initiated (OI) activities, you can't track the crimes "prevented".

In 2010, there were 914 drug arrests and 245 of them were for sales or manufacturing. In 2014, there were 397 drug arrests with 67 for sales or manufacturing. I believe arrests are an indicator of how we are doing in Anchorage at reducing crime.

Other Officer Initiated Activities shows how the drastic reduction in staffing at the Anchorage Police Department has equated to a much less effective police department. The following are some of those areas:

- Prostitution/Vice - 2009/206 arrests; 2014/29 arrests
- Driving Under the influence - 2009/2,216 arrest; 2014 1,056
- Liquor Law Violations - 2009/926 arrests; 2014/197 arrests
- Under 21 (MCA) - 2009/459 arrests; 2013/96 arrests
- Traffic Citations - 2009/45,361; 2013/22,818 - red light tickets cut in half
- Calls for Service - 2009/296,636; 2013/239,765

These are all examples of how much less contact police are having with the public; and contact with citizens reduces crime. They can't keep statistics on how many crimes these proactive efforts prevented.

I'd like to address property crimes, according to the Property Crimes Supervisor 85-90% of all property crimes are drug related, in other words these crimes are committed in order to get the money to purchase or trade for drugs. In 2014 the APD disbanded its theft unit, reassigning those detectives to other units.

At this time theft cases below \$10,000 dollars are not being assigned to a detective, even if there is suspect information. The responding patrol officer is expected to investigate the case in his "unallocated" time, which is time when the officer is not responding to calls, doing administrative work, or training.

We have all heard about the problems in Downtown Anchorage at bar closing. This problem used to be addressed by holding over patrol officers for several hours after the swing (4:00 pm - 2:00 am) shift. Those additional officers were tasked with walking the Avenue and making "bar checks". The Anchorage Police Department also had two officers walking the "foot" patrol, this was community policing at it's best and was appreciated by the downtown businesses. Both of these practices are no longer in effect in downtown Anchorage.

In 2010 the Municipality of Anchorage contracted with Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to evaluate the Anchorage Police Departments resources and how they were being allocated, the administration at that time set a goal of 40% of unallocated time for community policing.

The PERF report suggested that the Anchorage Police Department would need to increase it's staffing level of officers to 456 from the 414 officers we had then (2009) to achieve the 40% of unallocated time for community policing.

PERF'S recommendations were ignored and in June 2014, the Anchorage Police Department's sworn officer levels plummeted to 321 sworn, plus an academy of 17.

In order to become a proactive police department we need to increase our staffing levels to those suggested by the PERF report.

It is not going to be an easy task to build up the police department staffing levels. APD has seen a 75% reduction in applicants since I became a police officer. We need to continue to offer competitive wages and a public safety defined benefit retirement plan. We need to retain the new

officers we hire and having a defined benefit retirement would encourage the officers to stay their career at APD.

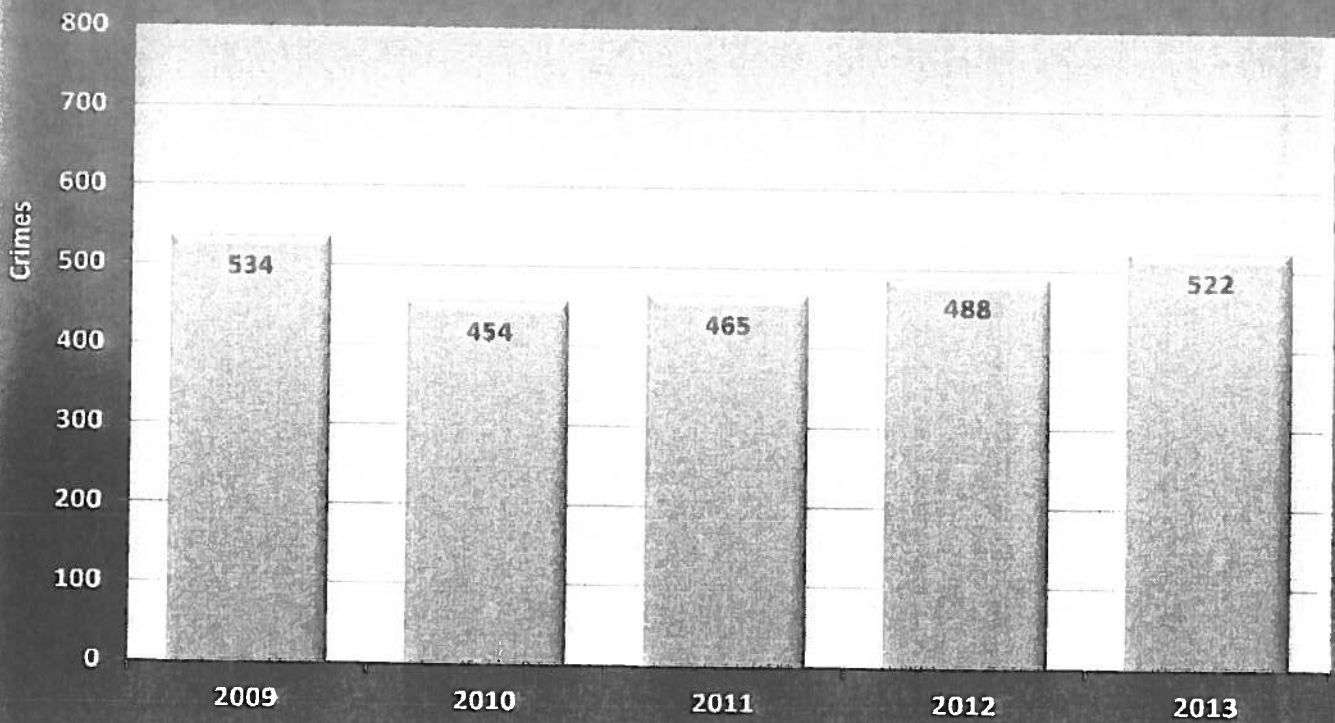
Thank you for giving me the opportunity to give you my perspective.

Jeff Bell

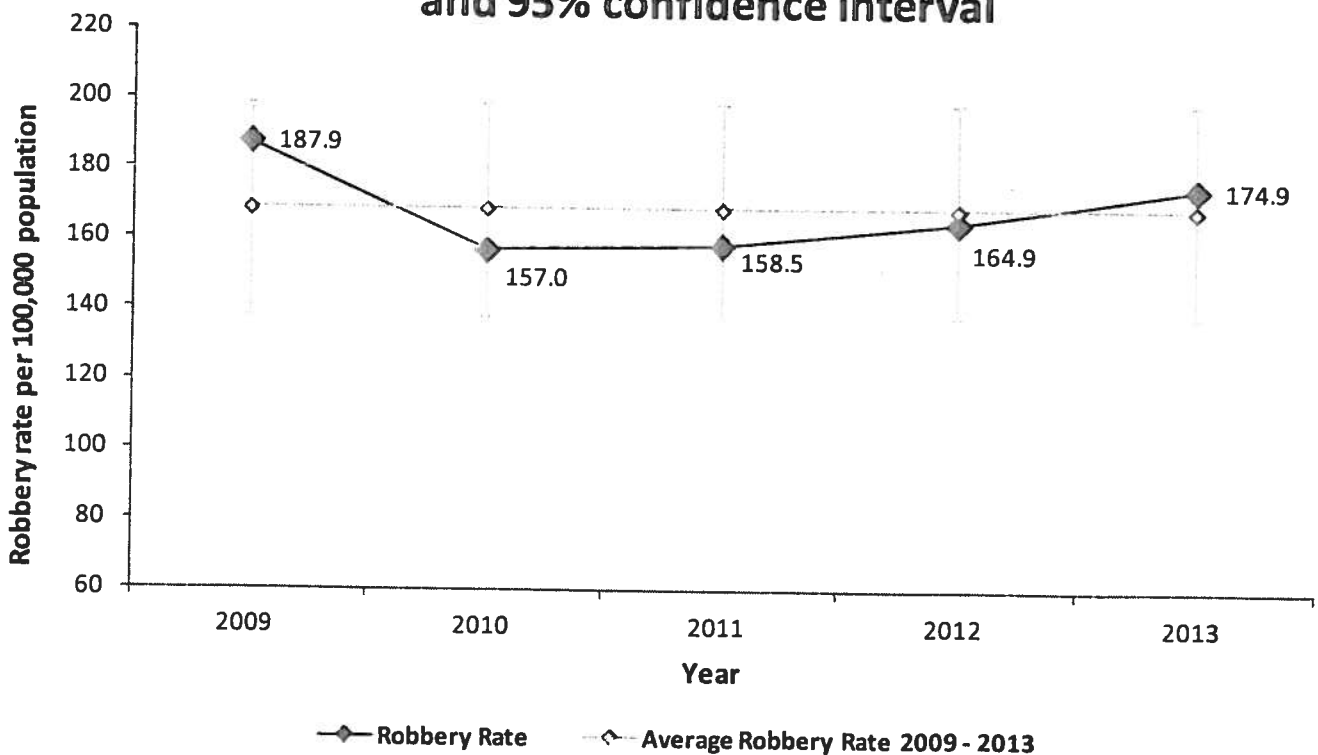
Vice President, APDEA

[vicepresident@apdea.org](mailto:vicepresident@apdea.org)

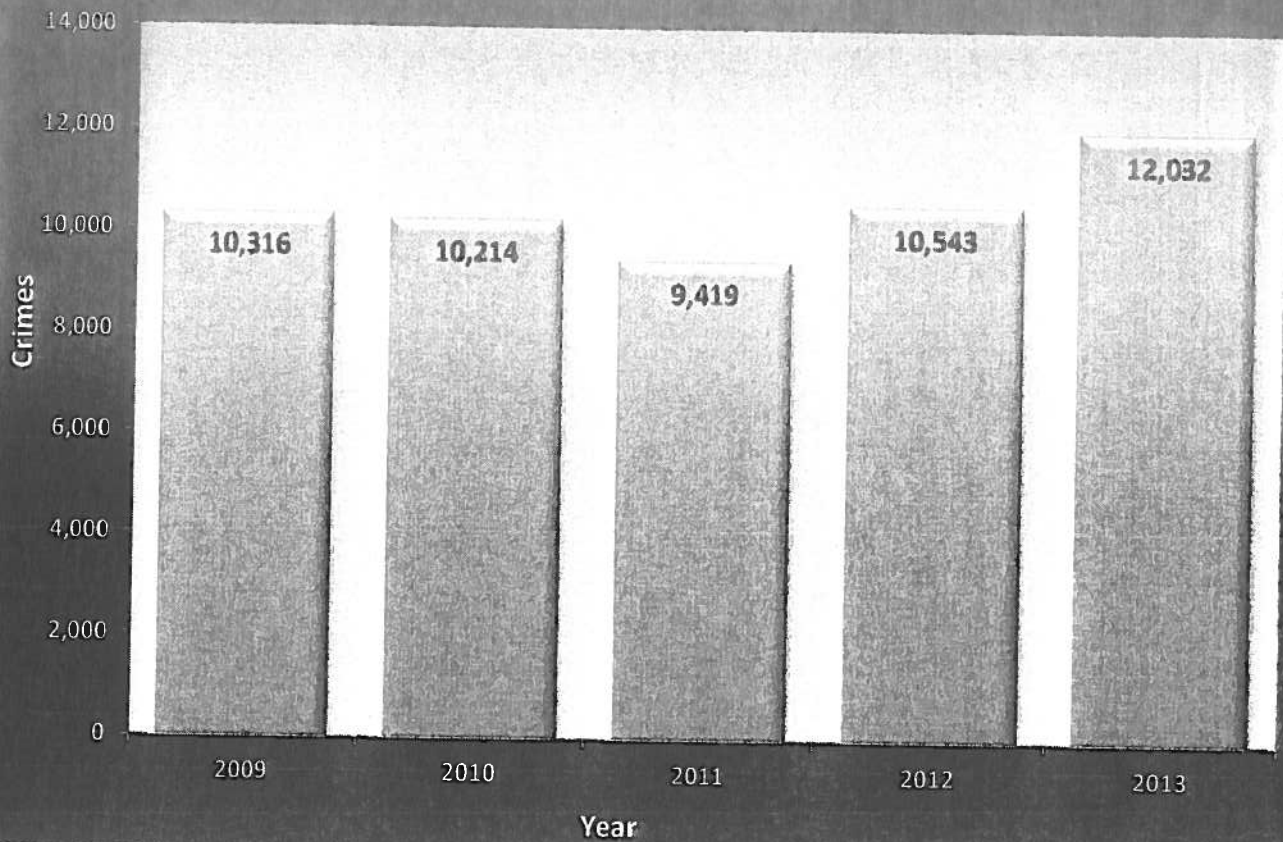
## Robbery 2009 - 2013



## Robbery rate per 100,000 population with average and 95% confidence interval

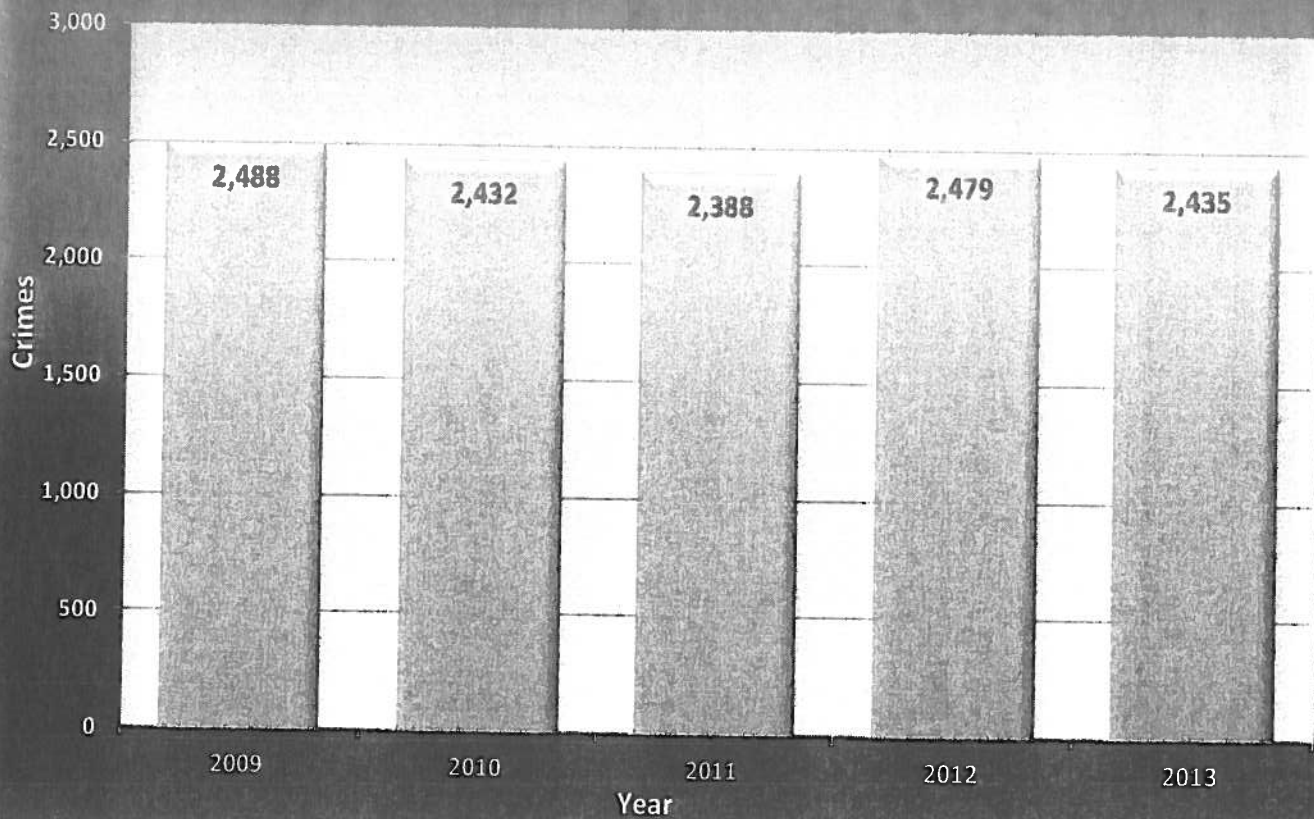


## UCR Part I Index - Property Crimes 2009 - 2013



UCR PART I PROPERTY CRIMES	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Burglary	1,613	1,223	1,080	1,158	1318
Larceny-Theft	7,835	8,178	7,714	8,554	9845
Motor Vehicle Theft	868	813	625	831	869
Total	10,316	10,214	9,419	10,543	12,032

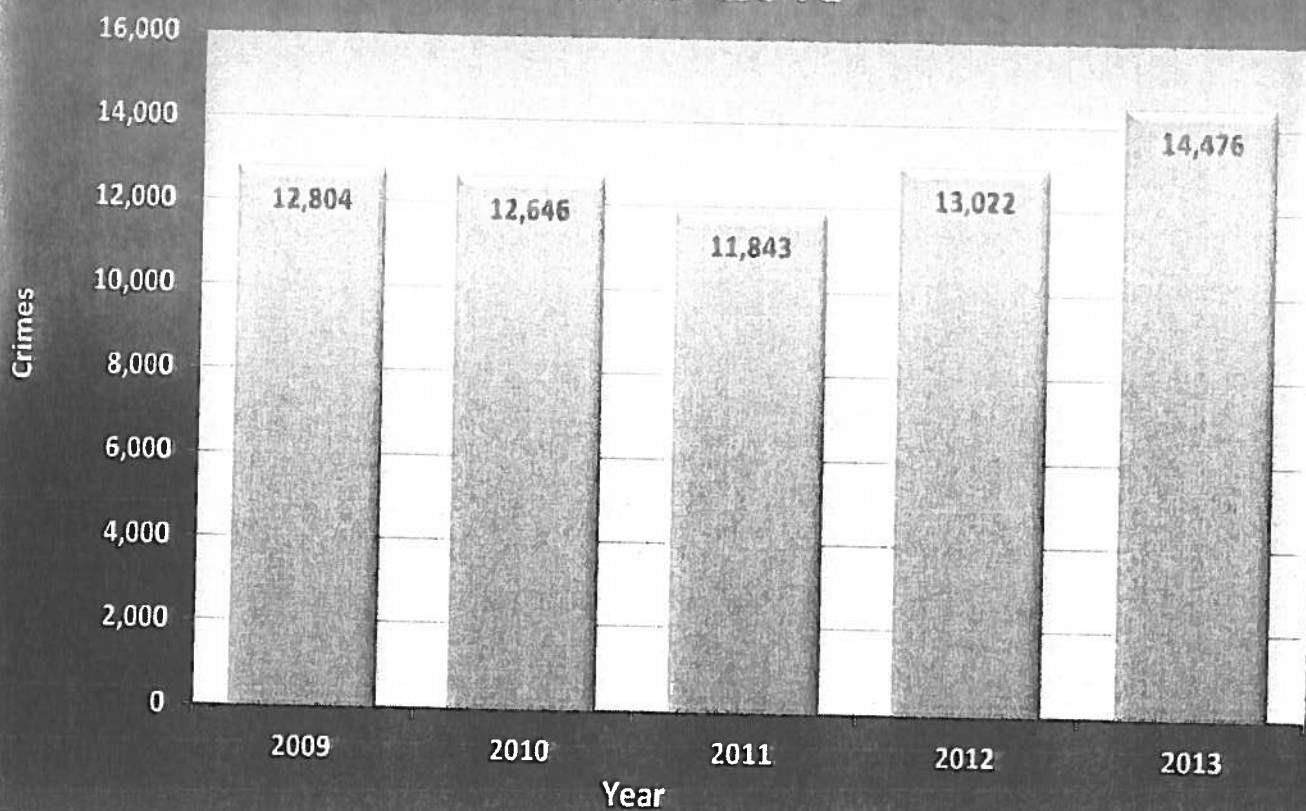
## UCR Part I Index - Person Crimes 2009 - 2013



UCR PART I PERSON CRIMES	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Murder/Nonnegligent Homicide*	14	13	12	15	14
Forcible Rape**	282	264	283	303	408
Robbery	534	454	465	488	522
Aggravated Assault	1,658	1,701	1,628	1,673	1,491
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,488</b>	<b>2,432</b>	<b>2,388</b>	<b>2,479</b>	<b>2,435</b>
*Manslaughter by Negligence is not considered by the FBI for UCR summary reporting					
**Forcible Rape definition changed for 2013					



## Summary of UCR Index Crimes 2009-2013



UCR INDEX CRIMES	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Murder and Nonnegligent Homicide*	14	13	12	15	14
Forcible Rape **	282	264	283	303	408
Robbery	534	454	465	488	522
Aggravated Assault	1,658	1,701	1,628	1,673	1,491
Burglary	1,613	1,223	1,080	1,158	1,318
Larceny-Theft	7,835	8,178	7,750	8,554	9,854
Motor Vehicle Theft	868	813	625	831	869
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,804</b>	<b>12,646</b>	<b>11,843</b>	<b>13,022</b>	<b>14,476</b>

\*Manslaughter by Negligence is not considered by the FBI for UCR summary reporting

\*\*Forcible Rape definition changed for 2013