Putting Homicide Rates in Their Place
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Cathy Lanier is Chief of Police of the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C. Lanier has spent her entire law enforcement career with the Metropolitan Police Department, beginning in 1990. She served as commander of the Fourth District, one of the largest and most diverse residential patrol districts in the city. She also served as the commanding officer of the Department's Major Narcotics Branch and Vehicular Homicide Units. Previously, she was commander of the Special Operations Division, where she managed the Emergency Response Team, Aviation and Harbor Units, Horse Mounted and Canine Units, Special Events and Dignitary Protection Branch, and Civil Disturbance Units.

Nancy La Vigne is director of the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where she oversees a research portfolio of more than three dozen projects spanning crime, justice, and public safety topics. Before being appointed director in 2009, La Vigne served for eight years as a senior research associate, directing projects on prisoner reentry, crime prevention, policing, and the evaluation of criminal justice technologies. Prior to joining the Urban Institute, La Vigne was the founding director of the Crime Mapping Research Center at the National Institute of Justice and research director for the Texas sentencing commission.

James Lynch is professor and chair of the University of Maryland’s Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice. Previously, he served as the director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics in the United States Department of Justice. Prior to that, he was a distinguished professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at John Jay College, City University of New York. He was a professor in the Department of Justice, Law and Society at American University from 1986 to 2005 and chair of the department from 2003 to 2005. He was the vice president of the American Society of Criminology and served previously on its board. Lynch has published four books on crime statistics, victimization surveys, victimization risk, and the role of sanctions in social control.

John Roman is a senior fellow in the Justice Policy Center at the Urban Institute, where he focuses on evaluations of innovative crime-control policies and justice programs. He is also the executive director of the District of Columbia Crime Policy Institute, where he directs research on crime and justice matters on behalf of the Executive Office of the Mayor. Roman is directing several studies funded by the National Institute of Justice, including two randomized trials of the use of DNA in motor vehicle thefts and burglary investigations, an evaluation of post-conviction DNA evidence testing to estimate rates of wrongful conviction, and a study on why forensic evidence is rarely used by law enforcement to identify unknown offenders. He manages the national evaluation of adult drug courts, directs a study on the social benefit of informal social controls of postal carriers, and is working to develop the first social-impact bonds in the United States.