



CONSERVING THE PEACE THROUGH VALUES DRIVEN SERVICE / SHERIFF PAT GARRETT

January 23, 2020

Joe Nye
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Joseph_b_nye@omb.eop.gov

Dear Mr. Nye,

I am the sheriff of the second-largest county in Oregon. Our county is also very racially diverse, as are very many communities across our country.

The purpose of this letter is to encourage the United States Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to expand race categories for purposes of agency reporting for the FBI Uniform Crime Reports (UCR). Quality crime-related data across broad racial categories is important to better understand issues of justice system equity and victimization. These issues are of great importance in our community and in many communities across our country.

We strongly support the FBI UCR program as an excellent source of crime-related data gathered over many years and used for trending and research. It's our pleasure to provide data for FBI UCR reporting each year, in addition to agency reporting being required by state law (ORS 181A.225). As you know, race categories used for FBI Uniform Crime Reporting are limited to five¹. Our ability to expand race categories is constrained, given the categories we use are designed to fulfill our FBI UCR reporting responsibilities. While there are several reasons why this is problematic, I will only mention two. We have a large Hispanic population in our community but under the current five categories they are usually classified as white. Many of them do not identify as white. We also have many individuals who identify as mixed race, but they must be artificially categorized as one of the five available categories. Transparency in policing is critical to community trust, and not being able to provide accurate numbers for our Hispanic or mixed-race populations for arrests or when victims of a crime does not promote trust, nor does it honor the racial identity of many in our community.

Racial diversity builds strong, vibrant communities. Strong partnerships among law enforcement and diverse communities requires trust-building relationships, developed over time. Reliable crime-related data that largely represents diverse communities is increasingly important to building relationships. Such data conveys we value each group as we do any other segment of our community. Consequently, I am appealing to the OMB to expand race categories and offer my time and our resources to help.

Sincerely,

Sheriff Pat Garrett
Washington County

¹ White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander;
<https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/ucr/about-the-ucr-program.pdf>