

RICE UNIVERSITY'S
BAKER INSTITUTE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

News, Research and Events

July 31, 2020



A conversation on policing, racial justice and policy reform

In the wake of George Floyd's killing, there have been continued protests across the nation demanding police reform. Questions remain about how best to address systemic violence and racism in law enforcement and what role the police should have in our communities. In a recent webinar, [Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo](#), [state Rep. Nicole Collier](#), D-Fort Worth, and [Rob Kenter](#) from the Center for Policing Equity grappled with some of these difficult questions. [Katharine Neill Harris](#), the Alfred C. Glassell, III, Fellow in Drug Policy, moderated the lively discussion.

Collier introduced several policy solutions, including redefining “excessive force,” establishing civilian oversight boards and redirecting funds to mental health professionals to assist the police when necessary. Acevedo pointed out that the police are just one component of the entire criminal justice system and that for widespread change to occur, reforms are needed across all sectors of this system. He also cautioned against relying entirely on civilian oversight boards as a “perfect solution” to police violence, though his police department is “all in” for changes and reforms that will better protect civilians. Kenter agreed with Collier and Acevedo, emphasizing the importance of relying on data when implementing reforms. Like Collier, he suggested that a key step forward is to reduce the footprint of police in spaces they are not strictly needed, including situations where mental health professionals are better suited to deescalate potential violence.

In a Q&A segment, the speakers responded to further questions about how to create broader cultural changes in police forces in Houston and across the nation. This webinar, which can be viewed [here](#), was sponsored by the [Baker Institute Drug Policy program](#) and is the second of a series of discussions about the criminal justice system, racial equity and public health, offered in collaboration with the [Center for Health and Biosciences](#). The first webinar, on the connection between the “War on Drugs” and police violence, can be viewed [here](#).

“Three months after its global clout reached a nadir, OPEC has re-emerged as a model of transnational cooperation and collective sacrifice.”

Jim Krane, the Wallace S. Wilson Fellow for Energy Studies,
and Mark Finley, Fellow in Energy and Global Oil,
in an article for [World Politics Review](#)



Thank you for supporting the Baker Institute during Rice's 24-Hour Challenge!

Baker Institute donors generously gave more than \$36,000 during Rice's annual giving day on June 25. These funds will advance our nonpartisan, data-driven research, which informs and guides policymakers and the public alike. Your contributions exceeded our expectations. We are grateful for friends like you.

If you missed the opportunity to participate in the 24-Hour Challenge and would like information on ways to support our critical work, please visit our [giving page](#).

Upcoming Events

Webinar: A heavy burden to bear — The impact of mass incarceration on women. A panel featuring [Brittany Barnett](#), award-winning attorney and social entrepreneur, [Jennifer Herring](#), director of re-entry services at the Harris County Sheriff's Office, and [Nadine Scamp](#), CEO of Santa Maria Hostel, considers comprehensive strategies to address challenges facing women involved in the criminal justice system. **August 6 | 1:00 pm**

Webinar: Lessons from Covid-19 — Efficiency vs. resilience. University Professor [Moshe Vardi](#), a Baker Institute Rice Faculty Scholar and the Karen Ostrum George Distinguished Service Professor in Computational Engineering at Rice, explains how the fields of computer science and economics can broaden their focus to make resilience a primary consideration. **August 12 | 1:00 pm**

Visit our [events page](#) for a complete list.

Get Involved with the Baker Institute

Become a member of the [Baker Institute Roundtable](#) and [Roundtable Young Professionals](#). Contact [our development office](#) for more information on how you can join the conversation on the relevant issues and ideas that shape our world.



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Privacy policy](#)

Copyright © 2020 Baker Institute for Public Policy
Rice University, MS-40, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251-189214