

William B. Evans
Police Commissioner
Boston Police Department

“From Austin to Boston-Lessons Learned on Homeland Security Threat Information Sharing”
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On behalf of Mayor Martin Walsh and myself, I want to thank the Committee for asking me to participate in this hearing today. I would like to take a moment to remember fallen Yarmouth Police Officer Sean Gannon. Officer Gannon was killed in the line of duty last week and our hearts are with his family, friends and fellow officers as he is laid to rest today.

As I reflect on the Five-Year Anniversary of the Bombing of the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013, the importance of collaboration between Federal, State and Local Law Enforcement partners is only reaffirmed. The same is true for the importance of the communication between law enforcement, our public and private partners, and the communities we serve.

As we watch events unfold across the country, it is clear that the timely sharing of information is at the center of a successful police and community response. This is so true for the recent bombings in Austin Texas, which remind us all of how quickly tragedy can descend upon innocent citizens and cause senseless injury and death. This includes 39 year old Stephan House, who was killed on his front porch; 17 year old Draylen Mason, who was killed by a package in his home while his mother was badly injured; and the many others who were injured by the package bombs from, at the time, an unknown enemy.

These tragic events are all too reminiscent of the Bombing my city suffered during the 2013 Boston Marathon, including a lockdown and an exhaustive manhunt by law enforcement not knowing if or when the next attack might occur. While watching the news reports from Austin during this time, I understood and could relate to the police and the community's concern as an unidentified threat impacted their neighborhoods. Like Boston, the residents of Austin stood strong in the face of adversity while its local leaders, including my co-panelist Chief Brian Manley of the Austin Police Department, and other Texas representatives spoke with one voice, one message, working to ease the public tension while hunting for a killer. Also, like in the aftermath of the Marathon Bombing, I knew that behind the scenes there was a team of men and women working around the clock to gather information and investigate leads while sharing that information across multiple law enforcement agencies, all with the common purpose of capturing the suspect that was causing such distress and harm to the city.

Ever since September 11, 2001, information sharing between agencies, both large and small, local, state and federal, has been the benchmark for successful prevention and response to threats. Trusting and open communications between local and federal partners are crucial to keeping our communities safe. I have witnessed the benefits of this type of information sharing first hand and it continues to improve the success of our agencies every day.

At the center of these successful partnerships is this timely sharing of this pertinent information, as shown by Chief Manley's immediate response to the events in Austin, with the FBI and ATF joining him to work side by side during the investigation. As soon as the bombs went off in

Austin, a network of information and data sharing was underway. These communications included the facts of what was taking place in order to help other communities prepare appropriately while also searching for similarities to other events in order to gather necessary intelligence to identify possible suspects. Included in this Intel network was the Austin Regional Intelligence Center, one of seven centers in Texas and seventy eight across America under the Department of Homeland Security umbrella. The Center began gathering and sharing intelligence in order to assist investigators out on the street and across our nation.

One of the early information law enforcement bulletins distributed by the Texas Joint Crime Information Fusion Center even sources a Situational Awareness bulletin on approach to explosive devices disseminated by the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC) months earlier. The FBI San Antonio office was also forwarding Situational Awareness bulletins across the country, informing agencies and asking them to contact the office with any information on any similar types of suspicious activities or threats.

A long list of local, state, and federal partners kept the communication channels open. This list included the FBI Office of Partner Engagement and the Department of Homeland Security, both continuing to engage with, and inform local law enforcement nationwide in the event of threat to those communities. This network was especially important after an explosive was identified at the Fed Ex location sixty miles from Austin. The possibility that multiple explosive packages could have been shipped across the country again confirmed the importance of knowledge shared among multiple jurisdictions. This allowed law enforcement to prepare, including what to look for and how to respond, should a similar threat come into their city.

In the end, Austin authorities, along with Texas state assets, the FBI and ATF, located a suspect who ultimately took his own life with his own explosive device. Although the threat was gone, the need for information did not stop and the Texas leadership came together again to provide an overview to multi-jurisdictional partners, including a timeline and synopsis of the events. This education in the aftermath will assist all law enforcement if faced with this type of unfortunate event in the future. I commend these local, state and federal responders. Our communities are safer as a result of your efforts.

Another one of the most important aspects of successful information sharing is keeping public and private partners informed, with one of the most basic steps being:

See Something, Say Something.

The Department has developed a comprehensive information sharing partnership with our public and private sector stakeholders called BRIC Shield. There are more than 1,000 stakeholders from the private sector and non-governmental organizations across the Metro Boston Region registered to receive and share information through BRIC Shield for public safety and homeland security purposes. The information shared includes the latest crime bulletins, pattern and trend analysis of criminal activity in the region, international, national and regional analysis of homeland security incidents and threats as they relate to the region, real time alerts and situational awareness updates.

To further ensure the continuous flow of information, the Department has officers assigned to the National Network of Fusion Centers, the Joint Terrorism Task Force, the International Association of Chiefs of Police Committee on Terrorism, the Major City Chiefs Intelligence Commanders Group, and the National Operations Center. The Department's representation within these organizations and committees further supports the continuous flow of information among our law enforcement partners.

In Boston, we have a long history of great relationships with our law enforcement partners, as well as our Community, whom we often train with for better critical responses. Not only does the Department coordinate with the community to solve crime, but coordination with our law enforcement and private partners is an integral part of our success. The Department participates in Urban Shield Boston - a multi-agency training exercise funded by the Department of Homeland Security designed to enhance the skills and abilities of our region's first responders, as well as those responsible for coordinating and managing large scale incidents, and other members of the community. Similarly, in June 2016, the Department, in collaboration with the Boston Red Sox, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Army Armament Research, Development and Engineering Center, conducted a multijurisdictional counterterrorism exercise at Fenway Park. The objective of the training exercise was to prepare law enforcement officials, first responders, and Fenway Park personnel in emergency procedures and protocols in the event of a mass emergency.

The Department's relationship with the community, and its ability to maintain a steady flow of information sharing with the public, is further enabled by our use of social media. In the days following the Boston Marathon Bombing in 2013, the Department used social media to inform the public without inciting fear, to instruct the residents on what to do, and to instill a feeling of safety within the community. This method of communication proved invaluable during such a difficult time in Boston. Social media, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, coupled with the Department's website, BPDNews.com, has allowed me to increase transparency and information sharing by posting the results of internal affairs investigations, seeking the identity of persons of interest and suspects in criminal activity, and seeking the community's assistance in locating missing persons.

An example of the importance of community in information sharing can be seen in a recent incident brought to our attention by Mr. Julian Edelman, a wide receiver for the five time World Champion New England Patriots. Mr. Edelman was made aware of a post on his personal Instagram account relative to a person threatening to shoot up a school. Mr. Edelman notified his assistant to contact authorities and the Boston Police Department was notified and responded. Boston Police Detectives Autio and McKeon and Sergeant Detective Kenny O'Brien in his last days on the job investigated the incident and notified the Port Huron Police Department of the suspect's information. The BRIC also transmitted information to the Michigan Intelligence Operations Center and shared the same with our federal partners for information purposes. Based on the Boston Police Department's follow up, the Port Huron Police Department was able to locate and take the suspect into custody, thereby potentially preventing a catastrophe from taking place in their city.