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February 4, 2023

Letter to the Editor
The Washington Post
1301 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

The Feb. 4 article, "Confidence in police is dropping, poll finds," cited the results of a public survey conducted right after the beating death video of Tyre Nichols was released. The public is rightfully upset by what they saw on that video. However, the horrible misconduct by those Memphis officers was not a fair representation of policing in America today.

The facts clearly dispute any perception of police as brutal racists. Just consider that a study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, entitled "Contacts Between Police and the Public," found that there were nearly 54 million interactions between the police and the public in 2020. Of those interactions, force was used or threatened by police less than 2% of the time. And in the rare instances when force was used or threatened by police, the individuals on the receiving end were 54% White, 23% Black, 17% Hispanic and 7% Asian or Other. And, particularly telling, only 1% of any of the individuals contacted by police said they experienced police misconduct.

Further, when looking at just police-initiated contacts with the public in 2020 (not 9-1-1 calls or traffic accidents), there is no statistical difference between the percentage of Whites (10.3%), Blacks (9.2%), Hispanics (8.2%) and Asians (7.9%) age 16 or over who were stopped by police.

While the officers involved in Mr. Nichols' death must be held accountable, it is unfair for this case to result in the broad-brush vilification of the entire policing profession.

Sincerely,


CRAIG W. FLOYD
Founder and CEO