

# Seattle Community Police Commission

Our City. Our Safety. Our Police. **Better Together.**

January 12, 2016

VIA EMAIL

Dear Chief O'Toole:

In the midst of various debates about the police reform process, including how to strengthen civilian oversight mechanisms, we wanted to pause and sincerely acknowledge that the Seattle Police Department has been exemplary in recent months in embracing a genuine partnership with community representatives.

While the CPC's perspective sometimes differs from SPD's, you and your team have unfailingly welcomed our input and worked hard to find a way to incorporate our suggestions in a way that can also work for SPD. You have welcomed--and even sought--our views on many areas of community interest, including body worn cameras, use of force, and hiring and retention of officers.

Nothing better demonstrates this spirit of collaboration than the partnership SPD has entered with the CPC and the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) to develop and conduct training on institutional and organizational bias. This training should be path breaking nationally, not only due to its focus on the detrimental impact of unwarranted racial disparity in enforcement patterns, but also because it will be co-taught by OCR, which is a concrete demonstration of the value of civilian expertise in areas of community concern.

The CPC is aware that you have engaged in this partnership voluntarily, going above and beyond anything required under current law. This sets a wonderful example. In fact, you make it look easy, demonstrating that there is no downside and much to be gained by partnering with community-based experts who have different perspectives on policing practices than those normally available to a police department.

We know this partnership does not mean we'll always agree; indeed, we are writing because your willingness to engage with us has survived those disagreements. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Rev. Harriett Walden, Co-Chair  
Community Police Commission



Lisa Dugaard, Co-Chair  
Community Police Commission

Cc:

Ed Murray, Mayor

Annette Hayes, Acting United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington

Merrick Bobb, Monitor

Peter Holmes, Seattle City Attorney

Patricia Lally, Director of the Seattle Office of Civil Rights

Brian Maxey, SPD Chief Operating Officer

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