

May 16, 2017

Seattle City Council
Via E-mail

Re: Support Stronger Police Accountability and Community Oversight of SPD

Dear Councilmembers,

Five years after the federal consent decree took effect, we're at *the* defining moment for police accountability reform in Seattle. We ask that you show your support for a community-empowered police oversight system by voting in favor of the following amendments to the legislative package that the full Council will vote on shortly:

- **The Office of Inspector General (OIG) and Community Police Commission (CPC) must be funded adequately.** CPC has done detailed analysis of the functions under the new accountability system and estimates that CPC and the Office of Inspector General will each need 10 full-time equivalents to accomplish their assigned duties. It is essential that this system be set up with adequate funding. We ask that Council state its intention to provide this level of staffing, as well as other needed operating funds, to both offices.
- **City leaders must be held accountable for pursuing police reform objectives in labor negotiations.** The City's bargaining position on police accountability issues should be made public before negotiations begin, which will encourage public officials to prioritize what they claim they are championing. Also, the police accountability oversight offices should serve as technical advisers to the City on its bargaining agenda concerning accountability issues, both before and during bargaining, to avoid inadvertently failing to achieve important accountability goals.
- **There should be no Seattle residency requirement for CPC members.** The current CPC is made up of people who live OR work in Seattle—the same requirement for all Seattle commissions. The draft legislation presently requires almost all CPC commissioners be residents of Seattle. This is problematic given that Seattle's high cost of living is forcing many who work or have family and roots in the city, especially people of color, to live outside its boundaries. We support allowing commissioners to serve if they have a demonstrated knowledge of policing issues in Seattle, regardless of where they reside.
- **CPC should have authority to evaluate the performance of the Inspector General and OPA Director.** If the Inspector General or OPA Director upset those with power and influence, CPC can provide positive evaluations to protect them from political retaliation. On the other hand, if these individuals are weak or ineffective, CPC can support the Mayor or Council in removing them. Our expectation is that the community's representatives in the police oversight system would have an overall system review function, which includes saying whether the professionals hired to perform key functions are doing a good job. Checks and balances are essential if one of these offices perform poorly and/or are subjected to political pressure, which we have seen in the past.
- **CPC should have authority to add to the Inspector General's workplan.** The Inspector General will have power to investigate systemic issues; to audit SPD, OPA, and even the CPC if the Inspector General decides to; and to direct aspects of OPA misconduct investigations. But considering that the Inspector General will likely be drawn from a small pool of police accountability professionals and may

lack deep community roots, he or she may not independently choose to pursue issues of greatest concern to Seattle's diverse communities. (Examples of these types of issues could include: whether 911 response time is impeded by agreements to await arrival of multiple units at a scene, whether SPD uses psychologically coercive interrogation techniques that produce unreliable confessions, and whether SPD obeys court rules requiring access to a lawyer as soon as someone is taken into custody.) The CPC needs to have the authority to ensure important community issues are investigated.

The CPC is *our* voice in this system—it must be granted the authority to create meaningful change that resonates with Seattle's diverse communities. Otherwise our new police accountability system may fail to deliver on the promise of improved police-community dynamics and fail to establish a solid foundation of fairness and equity that can be sustained over time.

We support CPC's balanced approach, which stops short of placing a community board above the Police Chief, and instead gives CPC oversight responsibility for the overall accountability system. Without the changes listed here that we support, this ordinance will fall short of that goal, calling into question the original decision to not seek more direct community power. Please restore the missing provisions.

Sincerely,

Mozart Guerrier, Executive Director
21 Progress

American Civil Liberties Union of Washington

Joanne Alcantara, Executive Director
API Chaya

Diane Narasaki, Executive Director
Asian Counseling and Referral Service

Tony Lee, Co-Chair
Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of King County

Marcos Martinez, Executive Director
Casa Latina

Andrea Caupain, Chief Executive Officer
Centerstone

Dorothy Wong, Executive Director
Chinese Information and Service Center

Michael Ramos, Executive Director
Church Council of Greater Seattle

Seattle Community Police Commission

S. Arsalan Bukhari, Executive Director
Council on American-Islamic Relations of Washington State

Estela Ortega, Executive Director
El Centro de la Raza

Sharonne Navas, Executive Director
Equity in Education Coalition

Rev. Paul Benz, Co-Director
Elise DeGooyer, Co-Director
Faith Action Network

Rick Polintan, President
Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington

Alan Garcia, President
Filipino Community of Seattle

Seattle Human Rights Commission

Toshiko Hasegawa, Executive Committee Member
Japanese American Citizens League, Seattle Chapter

John T. Williams Organizing Committee

Pamela Stearns, President
King County Native American Leadership Council

Peter Bloch Garcia, Executive Director
Latino Community Fund

Lynne Wilson, Attorney & Board Member
Mothers for Police Accountability

Gerald Hankerson, President
Seattle King County NAACP

Jorge Barón, Executive Director
Northwest Immigrant Rights Project

André Taylor, Founder
Not This Time

Deborah Jacobs, Director
King County Office of Law Enforcement Oversight

Rich Stolz, Executive Director

One America

Public Defender Association

SeaMar Community Health Centers

Maiko Winkler-Chin, Executive Director
Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation & Development Authority

Alison Eisinger, Executive Director
Seattle/King County Coalition on Homelessness

Pamela Banks, President and CEO
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle

Sili Savusa, Executive Director
White Center Community Development Association

Melinda Giovengo, Executive Director
YouthCare

Haleema Bharoocha

Frances Carr

Emma Catague

Kay Godefroy

The Honorable Phyllis Gutierrez-Kenney

Sharon Maeda

Gabe Meyer

Tammy Morales

Marla Murdock

Nikkita Oliver

Gustav Seixas

CC

Mayor Ed Murray, City of Seattle
Chief Kathleen O'Toole, Seattle Police Department
Peter S. Holmes, Seattle City Attorney

