

**Seattle
Community
Police Commission**

**Our city. Our safety.
Our police. Better together.**

January 29, 2018

VIA EMAIL

Dear Councilmembers:

We write to urge the King County Council to vote in favor of Ordinance No. 2018-0028.2, an ordinance that, if enacted, would provide legal counsel for the families of those who were killed by police in inquests. Ensuring that grieving families have legal counsel to help navigate the inquest into their loved one's death is imperative if we expect these families to meaningfully participate in the inquest process, especially given that the person killed is unable to participate in his or her own defense. Asking family members to acquire counsel on their own imposes an unjust and inhumane burden on people who are already traumatized and are dealing with the pain of suddenly losing a loved one. It also impedes the family's ability to ask questions to which the larger public also needs answers.

We commend Councilmembers Jean Kohl-Welles, Rod Dembowski, and Dave Upthegrove for proposing this needed step, and appreciate the support of Executive Dow Constantine and King County Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg have expressed.

We also applaud Executive Constantine's convening of a committee to examine how the County conducts these inquests and hope the committee brings forth critical reforms to the process. In the meantime, as representatives of the various communities across Seattle, we, the Community Police Commission, strongly believe that this proposed change is a necessary step that the County should take in its efforts to build public trust and confidence in law enforcement throughout King County.

Sincerely,



Rev. Harriett Walden, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Enrique Gonzalez, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission



Isaac Ruiz, Co-Chair
Community Police Commission

Cc: Community Police Commission
Executive Dow Constantine
Prosecuting Attorney Dan Satterberg