

Contact Information:

Seattle Community Police Commission

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Seattle Community Police Commission and Community Members Raise Alarm Over the Validity of Seattle Police Use of Force Data

Last week, the Federal Consent Decree Monitor, Dr. Antonio Oftelie, disclosed to the Seattle Community Police Commission (CPC) that Seattle Police Department's (SPD) Use of Force data omitted certain data points due to a malfunction. This defect confirms community member's concerns regarding missing data points that were raised at the last CPC Community Engagement meeting. The CPC can now confirm community's suspicions regarding SPD data and questions the validity of all SPD data and previous reports including assessments from the federal Monitor, which are based on data from SPD.

"Accurate, reliable, and relevant data is an important tool in police accountability," said Brandy Grant, Executive Director of the Seattle Community Police Commission. "However, the data presented in the Use of Force Preliminary Assessment does not reflect the experiences and realities of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, in their interactions with police. Simply put – this data set is not accurate."

Concerns about data validity underscore larger issues, namely that SPD manages its own data and conducts its own self-reporting, as well as how the Federal Monitor has been overly dependent on SPD data.

The CPC recommends an independent body for SPD data management to improve transparency and trust with the community.

At the most recent [CPC Community Engagement meeting](#), Dr. Oftelie presented the Federal Monitoring Team's Use of Force Preliminary Assessment. Even before Dr. Oftelie disclosed the SPD data malfunction, community members raised questions about the data's validity, such as:

- "How are we ensuring that this data is reliably and consistently captured?"
- "Does this data come from SPD Use of Force Reports? Was there any effort to collect independent data to verify the accuracy of the data?"
- "Why should community trust these SPD stats?"
- "If the Monitor audited the data, why is that not covered in the assessment?"

In addition, community members highlighted SPD's disparate use of force on African Americans and that SPD officers reported "unknown race" for 33% of subjects. The incomplete race data reflects systematic issues that must be addressed.

By painting an inaccurate picture of the realities of communities who are disproportionately impacted by policing, the Monitor and SPD are losing sight of a key goal of police accountability. Further, by

relying on inaccurate race data and while prematurely pushing end the Consent Decree, the Federal Monitor and SPD are dismissing the real harm and impact of Seattle policing on communities of color. This only creates further distrust between police and community and brings the City no closer to police accountability.

We call on the Federal Monitor and SPD to answer the following questions:

- How long has the data malfunction persisted?
- When was it first discovered? Was there a delay in informing community and why?
- How will the malfunction be resolved? How will this scenario be prevented in the future?
- What is the timeline for solving the SPD data defect?
- Will the Federal Monitor update past reports? And how will transparency increase?
- How will the Federal Monitor and SPD restore meaningful trust with the community?

We invite the Federal Monitor and SPD to a special CPC Meeting to create space for community to ask questions and share their concerns on the SPD data malfunction.

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The **Seattle Community Police Commission** is committed to listening to, amplifying, and building common ground among communities affected by policing. The Commission champions policing practices centered in justice and equity.

Use of Force Data Validity Letter

Dear Brian G. Maxey,

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By painting an inaccurate picture of the realities of communities who are disproportionately impacted by policing, the Monitor and SPD are losing sight of a key goal of police accountability. Further, by relying on inaccurate race data and while prematurely pushing end the Consent Decree, the Federal Monitor and SPD are dismissing the real harm and impact of Seattle policing on communities of color. This only creates further distrust between police and community and brings the City no closer to police accountability.

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Sincerely,

Rev. Harriet Walden
Co-Chair
Seattle Community Police Commission

Douglas Wagoner
Co-Chair
Seattle Community Police Commission

Brandy Grant
Executive Director
Seattle Community Police Commission