

NEWS RELEASE

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April 5, 2016

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Ald. Leslie Hairston Proposes Chicago Ordinance to Replace IPRA with New, Independent Organization

Citizen Monitor Essential to Restore Credibility and Accountability

CHICAGO, Ill – South Side Alderman Leslie Hairston (5th) is introducing an ordinance to the Chicago City Council that calls for the replacement of the Independent Police Review Authority by a truly independent police oversight agency. The proposed ordinance abolishes IPRA and establishes, in its place, the Independent Citizen Police Monitor--a credible civilian agency to investigate police shootings, use of force, domestic violence, bias, and coercion.

The call for the new ICPM is a direct response to years of biased investigations, lack of transparency and accountability, and failure to address patterns of abuse. IPRA was set up in 2007 shortly after the cover up of former police officer Anthony Abbate's videotaped beating of a woman who refused to serve him another drink at a bar on Chicago's Northwest Side. IPRA was reconstituted in late 2015 just as the U.S. Department of Justice launched a civil rights investigation into the Chicago Police Department in the wake of growing police misconduct complaints, including the year-long withholding of a police dashcam video showing the killing of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald.

"An Independent Citizen Police Monitor is needed, because you can't keep shuffling the deck with the same people and call that accountability," explains Ald. Leslie Hairston. "You must put something in place that's meaningful, that's supported by a budget, has a revenue source, and provides an opportunity for input by the people of Chicago."

The ordinance ensures the ICPM will have the powers it needs to perform high quality investigations, and will be accountable to the public, unbiased, fully transparent, rigorous, and independent. The citizen monitor will be selected with community input, and the organization will include a full-time employee as Director of Community Engagement to develop and implement a program of community outreach.

The ordinance draws upon research from the University of Chicago Law School's Civil Rights and Police Accountability Clinic and the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center at Northwestern University School of Law on best practices in police oversight and the experiences of communities most impacted by police abuse. It borrows from cities that

have undergone recent reform, such as New Orleans, Newark, Seattle, Cleveland and Albuquerque.

Among the proposed ordinance's key features:

- Prohibits individuals formerly employed by the CPD or Cook County State's Attorney's office from working in the monitor's office;
- Guarantees the agency receives at least 1.5 percent of the CPD's budget, insulating its budget from political fiat;
- Requires the prompt release of video and other information in police misconduct and shooting investigations;
- Requires the monitor to post on its website summary reports of each completed investigation, and comprehensive annual reports on its work;
- Requires independent audits of the monitor and the publication of those audits on its website.

"I applaud Alderman Hairston's leadership and courage in proposing this critical ordinance. This is what real transparency looks like. It's exactly what we need to address the lack of police accountability in Chicago. City Council's Black Caucus led the effort in exposing IPRA's central role in the police code of silence, in their petition to the Department of Justice. Now the entire City Council has the chance to do something about it," declares Craig Futterman, clinical professor of law at the University of Chicago.

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