

The Independent Citizen Police Monitor Ordinance —Summary and Analysis

The vast majority of Chicago police officers have received few if any police brutality complaints in their entire careers. However, the Independent Police Review Authority (“IPRA”) has enabled a relatively small portion of the force to abuse Chicago residents with near impunity. IPRA has lost the confidence of the public.

This 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, false arrests, illegal searches, sexual abuse, rape, and other forms of civilian abuse. The ordinance ensures that the Citizen Monitor will have the powers that it needs to perform high quality investigations, and that it will be accountable to the public, unbiased, fully transparent, rigorous, and independent.

The ordinance is grounded in the research on best practices in police oversight, and informed by the experiences of communities most impacted by police abuse. It also borrows from other jurisdictions that have recently underwent reform, including New Orleans, Newark, Seattle, Cleveland and Albuquerque.

Importantly, this ordinance does not purport to fix all aspects of policing in Chicago. However, it will address the major institutional issues that have plagued IPRA, facilitate accountability when police officers abuse members of the public, and build the trust that is sorely needed to improve safety throughout the entire city.



IPRA ISSUE	INDEPENDENT CITIZEN POLICE MONITOR FIX
LACK OF INDEPENDENCE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensures that representatives of communities most impacted by police abuse have a meaningful voice in the selection of the Monitor; ✓ Prohibits individuals formerly employed by the CPD or State's Attorney from working in the Monitor's Office; ✓ Guarantees that the Monitor receives at least 1.5% of the CPD's budget, insulating its budget from political fiat.
BIASED INVESTIGATIONS THAT FACILITATE THE POLICE CODE OF SILENCE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provides the resources needed to ensure high quality, rigorous and independent investigations; ✓ Empowers the Monitor to compel prompt officer and witness statements, and to obtain all relevant evidence; ✓ Requires the CPD to fire officers who lie during investigations or retaliate against any person who reports abuse; ✓ Expands Civilian Monitor's investigative power to include other forms of civilian abuse, including sexual misconduct, false arrest and illegal searches and seizures.
FAILURE TO ADDRESS PATTERNS AND PRACTICES OF ABUSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Investigates and roots out patterns of police abuse; ✓ Designates one full time employee to serve in a director level position to oversee pattern and practice investigations; ✓ Empowers the Monitor to identify and address systemic issues of the CPD;
LACK OF TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY TO PUBLIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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; ✓ Designates one full time director level employee to engage with communities and keep the public informed about the work of the Monitor's work and investigations; ✓ Ensures that the process to file police misconduct complaints is simple, widely accessible and safe, and requires a process through which communities members can provide real time feedback to the Monitor on the investigative process; ✓ Requires the Monitor to respond to community members' petition for public hearings; ✓ Requires independent audits of the Monitor and the publication of those audits on the Monitor's website.