

## MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

September 19, 2023

To Portland City Councilors

RE - Statement on Police Accountability Commission's Report & Recommendations  
Item 799, September 21, 2023

### **Members of the Mental Health Alliance urge the Portland City Council to adopt the recommendations of their appointed Police Accountability Commission (PAC).**

The Mental Health Alliance was formed in 2018 to join *United States v. City of Portland* as amicus curie.

Organizations which represent the interests of people with mental illness and have long participated in efforts to reduce police use of force used against people with mental illness joined together to form the Alliance: Disability Rights Oregon, the Oregon Justice Resource Center, the Portland Interfaith Clergy Resistance, and the Mental Health Association of Portland.

Paragraph 195 of the settlement agreement of *US DOJ v Portland* provides a timeline for the Council and the Police Accountability Commission (PAC) to write and implement a new accountability system. Members of the Alliance fully endorsed Paragraph 195 in court, and prior to that worked diligently to pass ballot measure 26-217. Two of our members served on the PAC, providing hundreds of hours of their expertise to benefit the City. We have great interest in the success of the new system.

We salute the volunteers who collectively donated thousands of hours of their time to repair the city's police accountability system, working very hard to design a replacement that reflects both the law and community values. These volunteers submit their work to Council complete and on time despite long delays from the City getting the commission up and running, followed by delays providing adequate training and orientation. This work demands recognition and respect from all of Council and the City staff who will work to implement the new system.

The most important value articulated by the commission is that the new accountability system be fully independent and free from influence by elected officials and City employees, including but not limited to employees of the Police Bureau and City Attorney's Office. Decades of experience has demonstrated that the City is and will always be fundamentally self-protecting in matters of police misconduct. City employee influence in the accountability process is the prime reason for our current system's brokenness, and is anathema to city and community goals of seeking justice and building the Portland Police Bureau into a learning organization.

Learn more about the Mental Health Alliance at [www.mentalhealthalliance.org](http://www.mentalhealthalliance.org)

Today and in the future, we look to your Council to safeguard and protect the independence of Portland's police accountability system - both in generality and in every individual case.

Members of the Mental Health Alliance include,

Portland Interfaith Clergy Resistance  
Mental Health Association of Portland  
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