

MENTAL HEALTH ALLIANCE

May 19, 2026

Councilors,

We write with grave concern regarding a proposed amendment to the Mayor's budget from Councilor Olivia Clark which would siphon funds dedicated by public vote and secured by city charter to provide independent and effective oversight and accountability of the Portland Police Bureau. While we recognize there is always a lively debate to be had on police funding no matter what jurisdiction, we believe Councilor Clark's specific idea is misguided. Her proposal undermines the foundation of what Portlanders approved in 2020 through Ballot Measure 26-217.

The [Mental Health Alliance](#) has been amicus to *US DOJ v City of Portland* since 2018, holding elected leaders accountable and responsible for the harm done to people with mental illness by the Portland Police. We're particularly suited to bring this issue to your attention. The result of Measure 26-217, the Office of Community-based Police Accountability (OCPA), is a part of that agreement - a part not yet in compliance.

We urge you to reject this amendment that ignores the overwhelming mandate of our citizens. Measure 26-217 was approved by 82% of Portland voters. It was a loud response to the failure of *US DOJ v City of Portland* and unnecessary police use of force unchecked by City Hall. It amended the city charter to fund a robust and powerful police oversight board. And it represented another in a long history of efforts by Portlanders demanding police accountability.

The designers of 26-217 spent collective decades trying to reform administrative discipline within the Portland Police Bureau and deliberately used the ballot to assure the independent future of the OCPA.

The argument for moving funds out of the OCPA fund? That there is unspent money in the fund. We assure you any unspent funds within OCPA are not due to an inflated budget, but rather because the OCPA is not fully functioning yet.

The funds are allotted because the OCPA will need capable attorneys of their own, investigators capable of reaching conclusions independent of police, administrators, volunteer coordinators, public outreach, communication support, and a location away from city hall. While these investments are costly – they are voter approved.

The budget for the OCPA isn't tied to the economic conditions in Portland, or a response to a specific emergency. It's 5% of the police budget, year in and year out.

If Councilor Clark and others want to prevent cuts to the Portland Police budget, the onus is on them to identify sources of funding that do not run afoul of voter approved allocation of

resources, or legal requirements the city faces.

Sincerely,

Members of the Mental Health Alliance

Organizational Members

Disability Rights Oregon
Oregon Justice Resource Center
Mental Health Association of Portland
The Urban League
Pacific NW Family Circle

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Juan Chavez, JD
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