

To: House Criminal Justice Committee

From: Iris Roley, Project Manager, Cincinnati Black United Front

Date: 16. 2021

Re: Opponent Testimony for House Bill 22

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, this topic is so important to me I felt the need to come and testify in person in the pandemic, and with health issues. My name is Iris Roley and I am the Project Manager for the Cincinnati Black United Front (CBUF) a citizen led, action-oriented group that decided to come together 20 years ago to address this very issue, Police and their Powers.

In Cincinnati 20 years ago, we were at 15 unarmed black men that had been killed in a six-year span as a result of interactions with police. We had major unrest, a boycott of travel and tourism that cost the city millions of dollars. Some businesses were impacted by this action closed and never reopen. Major groups, comedians, lectures and stars decided that coming to Cincinnati was not the thing to do. They understood the stories coming from communities. Many of our outdoor festivals that bring in high revenue took a major hit; Cincinnati had lost in big ways. We as a city made national and international news around Community and Police. We were in Federal Court and the DOJ came to investigate our police. **Somehow Out of all of this darkness came some light.**

The Historic Collaborative Agreement:

The African American Community has experienced the police as occupiers and predators for many years. Like everyone else Black residents want peace, but reasonably demand to be treated with fairness. They demand a police force that is accountable to all community. The lawsuit that resulted in the Collaborative Agreement traced 33 years of unrest – from the race riots in 1967 to 2000. That history tracked repeated flashpoints followed by efforts not to solve problems but to appease. We found thirteen blue ribbon panel reports; thirteen sets of broken promises. We identified eight stakeholder groups early in our collaborative process. This problem was not going to be solved by lawyers in a back room. It needed air. The voice of the people needed to be heard. Online surveys and facilitated group meetings were pursued over a period of several months. This process was supplemented by the community conversations sponsored by the Cincinnati Enquirer in its city-wide Neighbor to Neighbor dialogues and the excellent Study Circle sessions sponsored by Cincinnati Human Relations Commission. We All had to listened. The Collaborative Agreement and the Memorandum of Agreement– negotiated by the DOJ, police union, the City administration, and the community – **relied heavily on the wisdom that came from that dialogue.**

Five Consensus Goals adopted by the Community, FOP and City: **1.** Police Officers and Community Members Will Become Proactive Partners in Community Problem Solving **2.** Build Relationships of Respect, Cooperation and Trust Within and Between Police and Communities **3.** Improve Education, Oversight, Monitoring, Hiring Practices and Accountability of CPD **4.** Ensure Fair, Equitable, and Courteous Treatment for All **5.** Create Methods to Establish the Public's Understanding of Police Policies and Procedures and Recognition of Exceptional Service in an Effort to Foster Support for the Police

Core Collaborative- Terms Designed to Implement the Shared Goals

1. Accountability. Good policies require a system for holding officers accountable when they violate policies. That is why the **Citizens Complaint Authority** was established. With an independent professional staff its investigations provide an informed community perspective on individual cases and their decisions are presented to the City Manager before he decides on officer discipline. The CCA also reviews policies in action and recommends changes when appropriate. The CPD has also implemented an employee tracking system which collects all of the daily performance data on each officer in an effort to serve as an early warning system about those who may engage in misconduct. **2. Bias Free Policing.** The City is required to share data on every arrest, traffic stop, pedestrian stop and use of force. Supervisors must track officers who are outliers – those who stop more persons of color than others who work that same beat. They are identified and any bias addressed. During the six years of court supervision, The Rand Corporation studied the data, surveyed citizens and officers and studied hundreds of mobile video recorder tapes. They issued several comprehensive reports detailing the challenges we face. The work of eliminating racial bias and improving the interaction between officers and the public remain with us.

3. Problem Solving and Reducing Arrests. This is the most far-reaching aspect of the Agreement. The City agreed to adopt problem solving as the “principal strategy for addressing crime and disorder problems.” Problem solving requires that all the stakeholders engaged in a problem carefully analyze the data and develop responses tailored to the problem. Including many other strategies that do not involve arrests. In fact, many problems can be solved without engaging the police at all. Since it has been implemented problem solving has reduced arrests in Cincinnati by 50%. Reducing the use of enforcement activities reduces use of force and mass incarceration while promoting public safety.

HB22 and Our Opposition, and how it slaps the CA/MOA/Goals and Values right in the Face.

HB22 will not promote fairness and equity, something we’ve come to expect in Cincinnati in 20 years. It hasn’t included communities’ voices like ours that are not just in Cincinnati, but all over **OHIO**. There are many organizations like the CBUF, who have worked tirelessly at the local levels on police policies, procedures guidelines and discipline in an effort to interrupt the continued very **BAISED** policing we have seen all of our lives. In Cincinnati We’ve have worked hard to achieve goals of the CA/MO and all of its provisions that are attempting to help right the wrongs and that takes a tremendous amount of courage, integrity and accountability.

Passing HB22 won’t help us it will override what we’ve built 20 years. Relationships, programs, programming, systems change, ordinances after ordinance, conversation after conversations, looking at other systems trying whatever it takes...Not to go Backwards. HB22 takes Us, Me, My Souse, My Sons and friends backwards.

In all that you heard from me this morning and that’s not even the half of what we’ve attempted to do and have done in Cincinnati. Can you honestly say that HB22 will help to enhance these much-needed acts of correction?

HB22 requires people know that they are mentally interfering with the police, what does that mean?

Hb22 prohibits citizens from exercising their constitutional right that in a democracy is to question your government. That is the heart and soul of the Collaborative Agreement, questioning our government! Still to this very day.

In closing Chairman and committee

Passing HB 22 will create many opportunities for protestors who look like me interactions with the police at a protest, or just walking home more frightening, especially young Black males.

And as I said earlier the work of eliminating racial bias and improving the interaction between officers and the public remain with us that includes the community

Especially those that will feel the brunt of brutality if HB22 passes.

Please Do Not Pass This Bill.

Thank You,

Iris Roley

CBUF, PM

irisroley@gmail.com

Cincinnati, Ohio