

COLUMBIA POLICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION



Post Office Box 267, Columbia, Missouri 65205

CPOA Seeks Assistance Regarding Citizen Review Board

The Columbia Police Officers Association has long said that we are not opposed to some form of oversight of the police department. We actually support the creation of a citizen review board as long as it is created in accordance with national standards and as long as we are provided a meaningful opportunity to participate in the development process.

Neither our organization nor the Columbia Police Department has been invited to participate in the process of developing a civilian review board. We believe that a CRB created without significant and meaningful participation from the Columbia Police Officers Association and the Columbia Police Department will fail.

According to the most recent draft of the Model Subcommittee (July 15, 2008):

- (1) Those with felony convictions at least 10 years old would be eligible to serve on a CRB. Charles Manson would qualify. We think it would be inappropriate to have convicted criminals review police activity.
- (2) There is no provision for background investigations for prospective CRB members. We believe that all members must be required to submit to a thorough background investigation. It is our position that we cannot have criminals, even those who may not have been caught, arrested, or prosecuted sitting in judgment of the police.
- (3) We believe that there must be some mechanism to object to the appointment of an individual to the CRB for cause. It would be counterproductive to have those with known bias or agenda reviewing or judging the police.
- (4) CRB members would be required to complete only 20 hours of training. National standards recommend a minimum of: 30 hours of training; 20 hours of assigned reading; and 36 hours per year of ride-alongs. We believe that untrained people cannot effectively judge professional police actions.
- (5) Any eventual citizen review board should not have the ability to command the presence or testimony of officers. The Columbia Police Officers Association will staunchly oppose any board that has the power to hold inquisitions or have the ability to scold or scorn our officers in public or private.

We need the community's help. We fear that officers facing a board created without input from the stakeholders may hesitate to take police action for fear of retribution and condemnation. This would be a victory only for those criminals preying on our community. Please call and write the members of the Citizen Oversight Committee and the members of the City Council. Their contact information is listed on the Columbia Police Officers Association website, www.columbiapolice.org.

Please contact me with additional questions. We have members available for interviews and we are eager to present our perspective to any interested person or group.

Sincerely,

Donald R. Weaver, President
Columbia Police Officers Association
DonaldRWeaver@centurytel.net
cellular 573-864-7444

The Columbia Police Officers Association (CPOA) is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Missouri. The CPOA exists to give the police officers of the City of Columbia, Missouri Police Department a unified voice, to improve working conditions of our membership, and to serve and protect those that serve and protect the citizens of the City of Columbia. For more information about the Columbia Police Officers Association, please see our website, www.columbiapolice.org.