



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF ILLINOIS

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ATTORNEY GENERAL

November 12, 2024

Mayor Brandon Johnson
Chicago City Hall
121 N. La Salle St.
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Re: Proposed Cuts to CPD's Budget and the City's Consent Decree Obligations

Dear Mayor Johnson:

Shortly after your election, I welcomed you to my office to discuss the many touchpoints between the work of the Attorney General's Office and your work leading the City of Chicago. In that meeting we discussed how the Attorney General's Office has been engaged in a broad, years-long effort to improve policing in Chicago through a federal consent decree—a court-enforced reform plan aimed at ensuring the people of Chicago receive effective, constitutional police services. The Attorney General's Office started that reform effort in 2017 when we filed *State of Illinois v. City of Chicago*, 17-CV-6260. Then, as now, we faced an incoming federal administration that devalued the importance of constitutional policing.

I am writing to you today because of my grave concern over your proposed budget cuts to the Chicago Police Department ("CPD")—the deepest of which target units within CPD responsible for implementing the consent decree's reforms. I strongly urge you to reconsider these proposed cuts.

Under the capable leadership of Superintendent Larry Snelling, CPD has shown greater willingness and capacity to deliver on long-overdue consent decree commitments. The Department has done so while also making admirable gains in public safety. Although both remain unacceptably high, the rates of gun violence and homicide in Chicago are trending downward again this year. Now is not the time to undermine the progress the Department is making through unwise budget cuts.

As you know, since the consent decree took effect in March 2019, progress toward implementing the consent decree has been slow. Despite frustration with the slow pace of reform, my office has continued to collaborate with CPD during the past five years to do the quiet, steady

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work of reform. CPD's successful handling of the Democratic National Convention earlier this year demonstrates that that work is paying off.

Because of where we are—and the patience and perseverance it has taken to get to this point—I must remind you that the consent decree is not optional. The City of Chicago must deliver on its consent decree obligations. Under the consent decree, the City must provide the “necessary and reasonable financial resources” required to fulfill those obligations. (Consent Decree ¶ 700.) Cutting much-needed resources from the units within CPD responsible for developing and implementing the policies, training, and oversight required by the consent decree is directly contrary to that obligation. Adopting the currently proposed cuts would place the City at significant risk of being held in contempt of court for failing to comply with the consent decree.

I have copied the City's legal counsel on this letter, which serves as notice under the consent decree of my office's intent to seek court enforcement of the City's obligations if the currently proposed cuts to CPD's budget are adopted and implemented. (*See* Consent Decree ¶ 695.) I understand that the City's budget constraints require difficult choices to be made. But a binding, court-enforced consent decree takes certain choices off the table. I urge you to reconsider the proposed cuts to CPD's budget so that progress can continue toward effective, constitutional policing in Chicago and, ultimately, a safer city.

As always, my office is ready and willing to engage in collaborative discussions with the City and CPD leadership about how we collectively confront the challenges ahead. In this moment especially, our mutual commitment to ensuring constitutional policing in Chicago has never been more important.

Respectfully,

KWAME RAOUL

Attorney General of the State of Illinois

Cc: Mary B. Richardson-Lowry, Jennifer Bagby, and Allan Slagel, counsel for the City of Chicago in *State of Illinois v. City of Chicago*; Maggie Hickey, Independent Monitor