

Community Safety and Police Accountability for Chicago



Campaign Background

For decades, Black and Brown communities have experienced the worst effects of unchecked police brutality. People across Chicago remain outraged over police shootings like those of Laquan McDonald, Rekia Boyd, and Kajuan Raye. In January 2017, the Department of Justice affirmed Black and Brown experiences with police in a scathing report on the Chicago Police Department. The report concluded that, “CPD engages in a pattern or practice of unconstitutional use of force.” While the city has made reforms to our police department, they continue to exclude the most policed communities from informing and shaping the policy.

Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA)

In the summer of 2016, a coalition of community organizations formed the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA). GAPA came together in direct response to the Police Accountability Task Force’s recommendation to develop a Community Oversight Board, allowing the community to have a powerful platform and role in the police oversight system. In November and December of 2016, JCUA joined GAPA organizations as they brought together 1,700 Chicagoans across 30 wards for police accountability community conversations.

Born from these conversations, the GAPA ordinance was introduced to City Council in March of 2018. The GAPA ordinance does the following:

- Creates democratically-elected district councils for each police district. 3 members from each district will work to engage the community and police and have a voice in determining community policing strategies on a district-level.
- Creates the Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability. This commission has the power to help select and remove key leadership positions as well as to develop and approve Police Department policy, including policies related to use of force and de-escalation.



As of September 2018, 22 aldermen have committed to supporting the GAPA ordinance.

Coalition for Police Contracts Accountability (CPCA)

For decades, CPD has had a “code of silence” that allows officers to hide misconduct. Our city’s police union contracts effectively make this “code of silence” official policy. The Coalition for Police Contracts Accountability (CPCA) has identified several contract provisions that discourage people from filing complaints, make it easy for officers to conceal the truth & obstruct investigations into claims of misconduct.

JCUA is a member of CPCA and endorses their recommendations calling on the mayor and city council to only sign a new police union contract that would:

- Eliminate the requirement of a sworn affidavit for investigating civilian complaints of misconduct.
- Allow for the filing of anonymous complaints.
- Prevent the disclosure of a complainant's name prior to the interrogation of an accused officer.
- Remove the ban on offering rewards to officers that cooperate or provide information on ongoing investigations.
- Eliminate the 24 hour delay on officer statements in shooting cases and create a clearly outlined process to receive statements from all officers involved in a timely manner.
- Eliminate officer's right to review and amend statements previously made to investigators.
- Eliminate the need for the Superintendent's authorization to investigate complaints that are five years old or older.
- Allow past disciplinary records to be used in investigating and resolving present complaints.
- Eliminate the provision requiring the destruction of police misconduct records.
- Remove constraints on how interrogators can ask questions.
- Specify that information provided to officers prior to interrogations should be a general recitation of allegations.
- Allow for the disclosure of the identities of officers who are the subject of civilian complaints.
- Require officers to disclose secondary employment and any other pertinent information that may cause a conflict of interest in performing their duties as a sworn officer.
- Reduce years of seniority for officers who have been repeatedly recommended for suspension because of findings of complaints filed against them.

Why is JCUA Involved

JCUA recognizes that many members of the police force put their lives on the line and carry out their duties with integrity. However, some police officers miscarry their duties and moral obligations with impunity. Chicago's accountability systems have failed, and we see and feel the consequences of this injustice in many different ways.

Our Jewish community is diverse, and some of us have stake in this issue because the color of our skin, our physical appearance, or where we live means we are more likely to face police misconduct. Some of us are drawn to this issue because of our history. Jews around the world descend from people that experienced state sanctioned violence, including pogroms, inquisitions, and genocide. Some of us feel these consequences as social workers, lawyers, and community organizers with relationships to heavily policed and systemically disinvested communities. As taxpayers, we are concerned that our city spends billions of dollars in expanding our police force and paying out misconduct and brutality settlements. All the while, Chicago is cutting funding to education, affordable housing, health services, and other necessary public services.

As anti-Semitic hate crimes increase in this country, the Jewish obligation to stand for police accountability only increases. We must remember that police accountability does not conflict with our safety, and that a just, transparent relationship between community and police contributes to everyone's security and stability. For 50 years, JCUA's mission has been to combat racism, poverty, and anti-Semitism. The mission that roots our organization recognizes that we must face these issues simultaneously, and that we cannot view one as coming at the expense of another.



How to Get Involved:

Become a JCUA member!
Join us and get involved with the campaign
at jcu.org/membership.

Contact Avra Shapiro for more info:

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