JENNIFER SHAW
DEPUTY DIRECTOR



July 16, 2013

The Honorable Bruce Harrell
Chair, Public Safety, Civil Rights and Technology Committee
And Committee Members
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Seattle, WA 98104-1850

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF WASHINGTON
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JEAN ROBINSON
BOARD PRESIDENT

KATHLEEN TAYLOR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Re: July 17, 2013 Committee Hearing
Proposal to Reconfigure OPARB

Dear Chair Harrell and Members of the Public Safety Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of the ACLU of Washington to request that you take no action at this time on the proposed amendment to the Office of Professional Accountability Review Board ordinance. This legislation is premature and will undermine and delay the work of the Community Police Commission.

In response to a call for change by the ACLU and 34 community groups, the City of Seattle and the Department of Justice have embarked on a long-term effort to reform the Seattle Police Department. Through an extensive and detailed settlement agreement, the parties created a roadmap to reform. The Community Police Commission (CPC) is an essential element of this agreement and was created to be the community's voice in the reform process.

Part of the CPC's mission is to carefully examine and make recommendations for improvements to the structure of the independent oversight components currently in place: the Office of Professional Accountability (OPA), the OPA Auditor, and the OPA Review Board. Specifically, in a Memorandum of Understanding, the City agreed that: "The Commission will review Seattle's current three-prong civilian oversight structure to determine if there are changes it would recommend for improving SPD accountability and transparency." The agreement goes on to detail the specific tasks that CPC will need to accomplish in order to complete this work.

The CPC is engaging in a careful and thoughtful review process to ensure that its recommendations will effect lasting and meaningful change. The Council's current proposal to change OPA structure is premature. Passing this legislation now will

undermine and delay the CPC's effort to review the whole system and will needlessly result in more amendments after the CPC has completed its review. We ask you to withdraw your proposal until the CPC has completed its work.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Shaw
Deputy Director

Cc: Mike O'Brien, Vice Chair
Nick Licata, Member
Sally Bagshaw, Alternate