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Statement of the DC Police Reform Commission Regarding the Selection Process for the Next Metropolitan Police Department Chief

WASHINGTON, DC -- The insights and experiences of the District of Columbia community – especially from the Wards most impacted by crime and by policing – are vital to the selection of the District’s next Chief of Police.

The District should implement a robust plan for community engagement in selecting the next Chief. This plan should include the creation of a selection panel that will convene community meetings in each Ward, and partner with community organizations, including service providers, advocacy groups, youth groups, parent and teacher groups, residents of DC public housing, faith communities, persons with disabilities, officer groups and the Advisory Neighborhood Councils, to determine the qualities the next Chief should have and the public safety approach the next Chief should take.

It is imperative that the selection panel take special consideration of the communities who have the most contact with the Department. Washingtonians who reside East of the river have historically been the most heavily policed and impacted by DC’s public safety policies and practices. It will also be critical to elevate the voices of the District’s communities of color, immigrant communities, LGBTQ communities, homeless communities, and the disabilities community.

The District should commission a community input survey, designed in collaboration with the selection panel. This tool has worked effectively in other District projects, *i.e.*, the Re-Open DC Task Force. Survey results could inform the community meetings and partnerships organized around residents’ priorities for a new Chief.

A thoughtful and rigorous community-engaged process based on the principles described above will help ensure that the next Chief meets our community’s expectations for effective policing that consistently reduces harm, works with others to ensure the health and safety of DC residents, and is accountable to all of DC. This moment is an opportunity to build trust and strengthen the legitimacy of the Metropolitan Police Department throughout the District. Meeting this moment requires the creation of a transparent, community-centered, Chief selection process.

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