On July 27, 2018, the Illinois Attorney General (AG) and the City of Chicago (City) released a draft consent decree to guide reforms of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). The consent decree process presents an unprecedented and historic opportunity for substantive reform of Chicago’s police system that has long been plagued by unlawful excessive use of force, abuse of power, corruption, and discriminatory policing weighing most heavily on African American and Latinx communities.

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights is Chicago’s hometown, nonprofit civil rights legal organization with a mission to advance racial equity and economic opportunity for all. In our August 16, 2018 letter to Attorney General Madigan, we commended the AG’s comprehensive efforts toward reform, but urged her to add stronger terms around fundamental principles of community involvement, transparency, and accountability.
In summary, we call for:

1. **Enhancement and definition regarding the involvement of impacted communities**

The current provisions lack the *definition* and *structure* to ensure that communities most impacted by past abuses will be part of the final development and enforcement of the consent decree, especially the provisions around community policing, crime reduction, impartial policing, and use of force. We recommend the following to strengthen the language around community involvement:

- Use mandatory, not discretionary, language when discussing the obligations of CPD to solicit and consider community input.
- Require CPD to proactively seek out and involve community organizations in the development and review process of new or revised policies regarding use of force and other issues.
- Define with specificity the minimum requirements for the frequency of contact for ongoing community input, and types of organizations to involve.
- Define clear objectives or goals for seeking community input so that the process is capable of qualitative review by the Monitor.
- Require CPD to track, maintain, and publish reports on efforts made for actively seeking out community involvement, and on comments received regarding new or revised policies.
- Make participation by community-based organizations in the development and delivery of training, including crisis intervention training, mandatory and professionalized (compensated).

2. **Greater Transparency and Public Access to Data Collection**

While the draft consent decree requires the City to produce and publish annual reports that include data and program updates, it fails to ensure that individuals and community organizations have direct access to unfiltered source data so that they can judge for themselves whether progress is occurring. The consent decree needs additional language to explicitly create public access to source data and materials and not rely solely on information that has been analyzed, aggregated, and filtered by institutions that are at the heart of community
mistrust.

3. Support for the Campbell and Communities United plaintiffs and the role of the Coalition

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights strongly urges the AG, the City, and the Monitor to work with the community-based groups represented in the Coalition (the Campbell and Communities United plaintiffs) as the most efficient and effective strategy for institutionalizing the role of communities most impacted in the reform process.

Without repeating them here, we support the specific recommendations made by the Campbell and Communities United plaintiffs during the public comment period. The changes proposed by these community groups are informed by and reflect the lived experiences by their members of horrendous police abuses and the devastating impact this conduct has on their communities. No voices are more critical to understanding our history and none more crucial in helping us build a new framework for the future.

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THE PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE DRAFT CONSENT DECREE ENDS AUGUST 17, 2018.

WE URGE YOU TO ADD YOUR VOICE TO DEMAND MORE STRUCTURE AND SPECIFICITY AROUND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

E-mail your comments to policereform@atg.state.il.us