



PRESS RELEASE

D.C. Police Union Intervenes in ACLU Lawsuit to Defund the Police in D.C.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Gregg Pemberton, Chairman

On September 18, 2023, the D.C. Police Union moved to intervene in a lawsuit brought by the ACLU that threatens the safety of District residents and seeks to undermine police officers' irreplaceable role as first responders. The ACLU's lawsuit is a transparent effort to further their goals of defunding police departments nationwide. The lawsuit accuses the District of Columbia of violating the Americans with Disabilities Act by allowing MPD officers respond to emergency calls that involve someone having a mental health crisis. The lawsuit targets police officers who respond to 9-1-1 emergency calls for service and alleges that the District should cease dispatching officers and instead send Community Response Team ("CRT") members.

Chairman of the D.C. Police Union Gregory Pemberton stated, "The District's CRT program has been an abject failure, not because of a lack of resources as the ACLU alleges, but because CRT members are ill-equipped to protect themselves or the public's safety when they respond to these calls." The ACLU's goal in the lawsuit is to divert more of these calls away from the MPD and to force the District to pour more resources into a failed program. Pemberton also stated, "It is time to end these failed 'Defund the Police' experiments that pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of District residents. It's also time to stop listening to activists like the ACLU on issues of public safety."

In its motion to intervene, the D.C. Police Union asserts that police officers possess the skills gained through extensive training and experience to properly respond to emergency calls for service when someone is having a mental breakdown. The Union takes the position that forcing calls by concerned residents to be re-routed to CRT's will delay the resolution of matters for District residents that often become violent and threaten public safety.

Chairman Pemberton went on to state, "There can be no doubt that when a resident calls 911 out of fear for their safety because someone is having a mental breakdown, they expect a police officer to be promptly dispatched to protect their safety, not a social worker or a counselor. The ACLU's case presents a clear threat to this expectation." The D.C. Police Union is seeking to intervene in this reckless lawsuit to ensure that the residents of the District of Columbia are properly served.

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