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Councilmember Dan Bostrom
320-B City Hall
15 Kellogg Blvd. West
Saint Paul, MN 55102

December 1, 2016

Dear Councilmember Bostrom:

TakeAction Minnesota's Board of Directors has taken a strong and unequivocal stance in support of removing police officers from St. Paul's Police Civilian Internal Affairs Review Commission (PCIARC). We ask that you vote to do the same.

The City's months-long effort to engage the community and research best practices for commissions that review complaints about police and civilian interactions was thoughtful and thorough. The recommendations coming out of this process should be followed, that police should not be involved as permanent members of a public body that is meant to examine their work. Doing so creates the perception of a conflict of interest and damages public confidence in police accountability.

Removing officers from the PCIARC is one important step you can take toward interrupting the pattern of negative, at times fatal, interactions that people of color and Native Americans have with police. If you want to build public trust in our police, then give us the assurance that checks and balances are in place and are accountable to us, the public.

This is a moment to walk the talk of racial equity. Choosing to make the PCIARC a truly public body gives the residents of St. Paul, people of color and Native Americans in particular, greater confidence that their experiences will be fully and fairly reviewed – without a built-in institutional bias. However, choosing to continue police presence in this committee in any way is a step backwards, away from public accountability, away from building trust, and away from the racial healing our City needs and our city government claims to care about.

Now, more than ever we need your courageous public leadership. This is a moment where need to check our privileges, deeply listen to the experiences of people of color, and choose to act differently. Now is the time to take this one concrete and meaningful step toward tearing down the structural racism that has harmed and killed far too many people.

We ask that you vote to remove police officers from the PCIARC.

Sincerely,

Dan McGrath
Executive Director

CC: TakeAction Minnesota Board of Directors