

Better Government Association Testimony for the Chicago Police Accountability Task Force

Good evening. I'm Alden Loury, senior policy analyst with the Better Government Association. The BGA policy team advocates for good government reforms and works independently from the organization's better-known investigative unit.

For years, the BGA has examined police accountability issues—documenting nearly \$1 billion to litigate and settle lawsuits for alleged police misconduct or wrongful convictions and nearly 70 fatal police shootings in Chicago over a five-year period, the most of any big city in America. In addition, the BGA found police misconduct to be the most prevalent factor in wrongful convictions, even more so than errors by prosecutors and eyewitnesses; and the BGA found that just four percent of complaints against Chicago police have been sustained, a rate lower than what experts consider the national average.

The failings of our police accountability system have cost taxpayers a fortune and, even more importantly, they've cost the innocent hundreds of years behind bars.

Allegations of police misconduct are the common threads.

We can no longer belittle these complaints, fail to investigate them in a timely manner and refuse to discipline officers who've made mistakes.

To rebuild trust, the BGA strongly urges you to recommend:

- Permanently preserving police records related to misconduct allegations and investigations
- Studying complaints as potential red flags that warrant

- early intervention for officers who need support, counsel, training or discipline
- Concluding investigations of officer-involved shootings and releasing video footage of such incidents within 30 to 60 days
 - Responding to FOIA requests in a more favorable and timely fashion; and automatically posting documents produced routinely or sought frequently by the public

Greater transparency yields more accountability, and increasing accountability improves credibility with and cooperation from the public.

Thank you for the opportunity.