



November 5, 2018

Spencer Cronk  
City Manager, City of Austin  
301 W. 2nd St.  
Austin, TX 78701

Dear City Manager Cronk:

As President of the National Association for Civilian Oversight of Law Enforcement (NACOLE), I write to express our support for your efforts to expand and improve civilian oversight of the Austin Police Department. Civilian oversight is an important mechanism to help ensure greater transparency, trust, and communication between the residents of Austin and the Austin Police Department.

Our experience over the last 25 years has shown us that strong, independent oversight builds legitimacy and public trust through increased police transparency and accountability to communities. Establishing the Office of Police Oversight will foster accountability through monitoring the investigations of police misconduct complaints, increased public reporting, improved access to the complaint process, help identify needed changes in police practices and training, and provide a meaningful voice for the public.

For oversight to be truly effective, the oversight entity must be independent of the police department, and the person responsible for oversight must: be accountable to the executive authority; have unfettered access the police department's personnel, as well as its internal reports, investigations, documents and decision makers; do regular public reporting; require the Chief of Police to respond in writing and in public to recommendations; and have the ability to initiate investigations. I am pleased to see that all these key elements have been included in the Office of Police Oversight.

Civilian oversight provides a mechanism that not only provides accountability of police misconduct, but it also helps to improve policing. Oversight breaks down the walls between police and the public by enhancing a police department's understanding that they ultimately serve the community and public interest, and by helping the wider community understand the unique and difficult challenges that officers encounter every day.

Understanding that discussions around police oversight can be very difficult, I applaud the efforts of all who have been involved in working together to bring greater transparency, trust, and communication between residents and the police department to the City of Austin.

Established in 1995, NACOLE is a nonprofit organization that works to enhance accountability and transparency in policing and building community trust through civilian oversight. To further our mission, we hold an annual conference that brings together the growing community of civilian oversight practitioners, law enforcement officials, journalists, elected officials, students, community members, and others to meet and exchange information and ideas about issues facing civilian oversight and law enforcement. In addition to the annual conference, NACOLE offers year-round training, support, and professional growth and development opportunities for oversight practitioners across the nation, as well as in other countries. More information about NACOLE, our programs and services and civilian oversight in general is available at [www.nacole.org](http://www.nacole.org).

Should you have questions or would like to consult with NACOLE on this matter you can contact me directly by phone or email at (617) 254-8331 or [bcorr@nacole.org](mailto:bcorr@nacole.org).

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Corr', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Corr  
President