

Statement from LGBTQ Community Members Regarding CPD Forum

To whom it may concern,

A small group of LGBTQ community members participated in a virtual forum on Tuesday, June 30, 2020, set up by the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to “introduce Superintendent [David O.] Brown to organization founders and leaders in the LGBTQ+ community.” The goal of the 45-minute meeting via Zoom was to foster a discussion on how CPD could better support the needs of the Chicago trans and queer community.

The ideas Superintendent Brown and other personnel presented in the forum were nothing new nor inspired: Follow-up on the long-failed consent decree, introducing more LGBTQ community liaisons, changing the official language of certain documents to be more gender-inclusive, community dialogues, etc.

What was new was the response: Nearly every trans and queer person on the call, representing a range of organizations, identities, and communities, called unequivocally for the defunding of CPD, and investment in the social programs that actually prevent trans and queer people from experiencing violence—including the violence that emanates from the police themselves.

Some of the most consistent demands raised were:

- **#PoliceFreeSchools** for trans and queer students
- **The decriminalization of sex work**, and of the lives of Black trans women and queer women of color
- **The substantial defunding of CPD**—no more money wasted on community outreach, sensitivity trainings, LGBTQ liaisons, and other failed reforms
- **The reopening** of closed schools and mental health clinics
- **Robust investment** in public education, housing, free mental health care, after school programs, healthcare, drug treatment, and community-led interventions to address violence

As trans and queer leaders, organizers, and community members, we demand the funding of community programs and social services IN PLACE OF and NOT ALONGSIDE more policing and incarceration. We remain steadfast in our value that policing is as inherently transphobic and homophobic as it is anti-Black, racist, and harmful to all our communities.

Even when asked to do so, Superintendent Brown and other CPD personnel refused to agree to nor support any of these demands. What they describe as a “disagreement” we understand to be irreconcilable differences in how we value and prioritize trans and queer, Black and brown, immigrant

and undocumented lives. What they refer to as “public safety” is solely a vision for how our communities are surveilled, harassed, and caged. Our vision for public safety is fundamentally about how our communities are supported, nurtured, healed, and given room to thrive.

Let the record show that we have sat at their table and made our demands through their channels. We refuse to be gaslit into doing so again, with the same inevitable lack of results.

Alexis F. Abarca put it best: CPD is like the abusive partners so many of us are familiar with as trans and queer people. They hold all the power, all the resources, and continue to dialogue with us about how they mean well, how they will change, how the dynamic between us will soon become more equitable. Yet they keep failing to deliver, and we keep coming back. They keep making promises, and we keep being brushed aside, ignored, and harmed. We, the undersigned, commit to breaking this relationship off permanently.

The demands of our community were made clearly in this forum, and we make them again here. We are not interested in any more time-wasting, face-saving conversations. We are not interested in any more superficial engagement with an institution built on and bent on our destruction. Meet the demands of trans and queer communities, of sex workers, of youth, or get out of our way.

Signed,

Stefán Cuevas-Caizaguano

Alexis F. Abarca

Charlene Carruthers

Rev. Jason Lydon

Benji Hart

Emmanuel Garcia

Ash Stephens

Kylon Hooks

Kim Hunt

John Peller

Modesto Tico Valle

McKensie Mack

Rey Wences

Joy Messinger

Aymar Jean Christian

Karari Olvera

Erik Roldan

Sharlyn Grace

Stephanie Skora
Ricardo Gamboa
Thermal Ellawala
La Tony Alvarado-Rivera
Tania Cordova
Monica Trinidad
Nebula Li
Latham Zearfoss
Jireh L. Drake
Anna DeShawn
Megan Carney
Erin Glasco
Alyssa Vera Ramos
Diana Trujillo
Jes Scheinpflug
Julio Rodriguez
Christian Diaz
Jama Jackson
Shelbi Hernandez
Tiffany M. Favers
Chandra Palmer
Julian Hendrix
Fredy Roberts-Ramirez
David Gauna
Dulce Quintero
Luis Roman
Mary Johnson
Carter Cavazos
Iliana Figueroa
Karla De Jesus
Jamie Frazier
Amanda LeVine
Colin Woods
Gustavo Varela
Edith Tovar
Jay Hollins
Deandra Cadet
Joe Robledo
Keedra Gibba

Theo Lakshmanan
Carlos David Fragoso
Justine Heredia
Allisen Hansen
Ashabi Owagboriaye
Alina Gofman
Pamela Ginsberg
Vic Wynter
Xia Xiang
Jersey Shabazz
Lezlie Barrera
Theo Germaine
Taeyin ChoGlueck
Jazz McGinnis
Darius R. Parker
Rogelia Lily Ibarra, PhD
Michelle Zacarias
Kelly Yu
Veronica Rodriguez
Jenn M. Jackson
Dominique Mckinney
Fer Lawrence
Linda Mishu
Emilia Chico
Sean Estelle
Kaya Daley
Lauren Vallone
Johannes Mosquera Wilson
Ryan Vilorio
Destiny Harris
Jeremy Saxon
Emily Collins
Tess Raser
Brianna Simone Montague
Isabel Robinson
Byron Green
Andy Thayer
Casandra Harrison
Emma Marsano

Terry L. McKenzie
Stacy Fox
Terry Dudley
Kevin Peralta
Dewayne Perkins
Michele Lakemeyer
Bettina Johnson
Asha Ransby-Sporn
Melissa Cintron
Don Trumbull
Phyllis Liu
Daniel Gonzalez
Randyl Wilkerson
Arianna Salgado
Juliana Pino
Rachel Williams
Amanda Varela
Deivid Rojas
Melisa Stephen
Audrey Todd
Kristian Bailey
Cynthia Brito
Mansi Kathuria
Jonathan Mayo
A.D. Sean Lewis
Carolina Macias
Jocelyn Munguia Chavez
Debbie Southorn
Marlene Cervantes
JJ Ueunten
Sarah Jane Rhee
Jonathan Barrera