



June 28, 2017

Mayor Paula Hicks-Hudson  
640 Jackson Street  
Toledo, OH 43604

Re: Department of Justice National Public Safety Partnership

Dear Mayor Hicks-Hudson,

We write to you today concerned about the recent announcement that Toledo will be one of 12 cities nationwide to partner with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to address violent crime. While we support city officials attempts to protect individuals from crime and improve safety in our communities, recent changes in programming and priorities by the DOJ leave us questioning whether this partnership will benefit Toledo residents.

Over the past few months, the DOJ has initiated a number of alarming changes, including:

- Commissioned the review of all current consent decrees aimed at reforming police practices, with the express goal of ensuring they were more favorable to law enforcement.
- Reinstated policies that encourage harsh penalties for drug possession and use, which goes against recent bi-partisan efforts to reverse the damaging and counterproductive decades-long policies of the War on Drugs.
- Grew the DOJ's investment in private prisons, which profit off those incarcerated in privatized facilities, and whose corporations often advocate for enhanced sentencing laws to expand their profits.
- Enforced immigration policies that targeted people of color and instilled fear in many communities, making victims and witnesses less likely to come forward.

Toledo has been a leader in reforming its criminal justice system, most notably through its participation in the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge. Ironically, the very mission of the Challenge is to change the way Americans think about and use its jails, yet the policies that DOJ has advocated over the past several months represent a step back to enforcement-heavy approaches that have failed to stop crime and protect our communities, and lead to overpopulated jails.

The partnership with the Safety and Justice Challenge has yielded positive reforms, but instituting policies advanced by DOJ could seriously jeopardize those gains. We strongly urge city officials to reconsider its partnership with the DOJ, and to ensure that any initiatives it implements do not lead to the use of dragnet style policing, aggressive enforcement of drug laws, and targeting of vulnerable communities.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me by phone at (216)472-2220 or by email at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

Mike Brickner  
Senior Policy Director  
ACLU of Ohio

AMERICAN CIVIL  
LIBERTIES UNION  
OF OHIO FOUNDATION  
4506 CHESTER AVENUE  
CLEVELAND, OH 44103-3621  
T/216.472.2220  
F/216.472.2210  
WWW.ACLUOHIO.ORG  
contact@acluohio.org