



June 28, 2017

Mayor John Cranley  
801 Plum Street, #150  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Re: Department of Justice National Public Safety Partnership

Dear Mayor Cranley,

We write to you today concerned about the recent announcement that Cincinnati 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 Cincinnati residents.

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

- Commissioning the review of all current consent decrees aimed at reforming police practices, with the express goal of ensuring they are more favorable to law enforcement.
- Reinstating 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.
- Growing 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.
- Enforcing immigration policies that targeted people of color and instilled fear in many communities, making victims and witnesses less likely to come forward.

Cincinnati has been a leader in reforming its criminal justice system, most notably through the creation and execution of the Collaborative Agreement over 15 years ago. The changes the city of Cincinnati made have been lauded nationally because of its emphasis on community problem-oriented policing, and creating authentic relationships of trust and respect between law enforcement and the community. 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. At a time when the Hamilton County Jail is under a state of emergency because of its overcrowding, partnering with DOJ on draconian and aggressive law enforcement would do far more harm than good.

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  
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ACLU of Ohio

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