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We were part of the community action that led to the creation of the Office of the Independent Monitor. That process began with community reaction to a series of murders by DPD in the early 2000s. It took the form of a demand that the city strengthen the then existing civilian oversight mechanism, the Public Safety Review Commission, to give it greater authority to investigate and discipline members of DPD, because there was a strong, widespread perception in the community that we could not trust the police to investigate and discipline themselves—a perception that still exists.

In response to community concerns, then-Mayor Hickenlooper substituted for the PSRC the Office of the Independent Monitor. While an improvement over the PSRC in that the OIM had a budget and paid staff, it fell well short of what the community had demanded.

The OIM is now the only civilian oversight mechanism we have, and it must be fully empowered to carry out its responsibilities.

DPD and DSD have from its beginning ten years ago resisted full cooperation with the OIM. These proposed amendments address the most obvious manifestations of that resistance.

Mayor Hancock in his campaign promised to restore public trust in law enforcement. But public trust has fallen to new lows with revelations about abuses in the cases of Marvin Booker, Jamal Hunter et al. Now the murder of Jessica Hernandez, and the DPD's refusal to release information about this tragedy, have only increased skepticism.

It will take serious changes in law enforcement culture, and a full measure of transparency and accountability, to restore public trust. But strengthening the OIM is a necessary part of that process. These proposed measure are not sufficient, but they are a good first step in that direction, ensuring that the OIM will have full cooperation from law enforcement agencies, and full access to all records it needs to carry out its mission.

We strongly urge the committee, and the full council, to approve these amendments.

Mark and Barbara Cohen, Colorado National Lawyers Guild