

The Be Bold Criminal Justice Group of Pilgrim Congregational Church supports increased civilian oversight of the Chicago Police Department. The Be Bold Criminal Justice Group supports the Grassroots Alliance for Police Accountability (GAPA) proposal through the church's involvement with the Community Renewal Society (CRS). **Specifically, we invite the congregation to participate in CRS's plan for a virtual vigil the day of the Chicago City Council vote on the proposals. Further details will be forthcoming and listed on the Pilgrim Church website when they are known.**

Background on current efforts to change civilian oversight of the Chicago Police Department

Civilian oversight of the Chicago Police Department has been an issue of debate that came to a head from the fallout around the fatal shooting of Laquan McDonald shooting in 2014. Many constituencies pointed to the failure of the City of Chicago, the Police Department, and the Chicago Police Board to provide an adequate and transparent investigation into the shooting. A taskforce convened by then Mayor Rahm Emanuel in 2015 and led by current Mayor Lori Lightfoot recommended formation of a "civilian police investigative agency". It was also a platform issue for Mayor Lightfoot when she ran for mayor.

Since 2016 various groups have put forth their vision of what the "civilian police investigative agency" should look like. Negotiations between these groups and the mayor and amendment of their proposals have taken years to resolve before a vote of the Chicago City Council has been allowed to proceed.

Summary of Two Competing Proposals

Currently two competing versions of ordinances are to be considered by the City Council in early 2021 (possibly as early as January). Although the two proposal are undergoing continuing amendments as they approach a City Council vote, both place significant authority over police activity in the hands of elected citizens. Authorities being debated are the ability to set police department policies, launch investigations, compel data from the department, recommend police budgets to the City Council, hiring and firing decisions such as appoint the police superintendent, chief administrator of COPA and members of the police board. The Civilian Police Accountability Council (CPAC) proposal lodges all such authority in the hands of the civilian body. In contrast GAPA allows consultation with the mayor and limited action by 2/3 majority of the City Council in cases of impasse. The general thought is that GAPA would see fewer legal challenges and opposition within City Council.