



January 5, 2015

Terry Witkowski, chairman
Public Safety Committee
Milwaukee Common Council
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Milwaukee, WI 53202

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Via facsimile to (414) 286-3456.

Re: File # 140136 crisis intervention training (CIT)

Dear Alderman Witkowski,

Mayor Barrett and the Milwaukee Police Department (MPD) are to be commended for agreeing to expedite crisis intervention training for MPD employees, including sworn officers, dispatchers, and telecommunicators. The ACLU of Wisconsin agrees that CIT will not prevent the use of force in all encounters between officers and people displaying signs or a history of emotional distress. We do believe that if more officers and dispatchers received CIT, including refresher and advanced training, the number of times that force is used could be reduced.

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While some have pointed to access and delivery problems in Milwaukee's mental health system as a contributing factor in lethal police encounters, we should not forget that the MPD is responsible for the actions of its members. The MPD must control those factors that are within its control. Improvements in the ways that Milwaukee police interact with those in need of mental health services should not be left solely to Milwaukee County.

Therefore, I urge you and your colleagues on the Public Safety Committee at its meeting on Thursday, January 8, 2105 to seek further clarity on how MPD intends to expedite CIT in the future. Among the issues that need clarification you might ask about the following:

- 1). How many hours per week and how many weeks does it take to complete the various levels of training?

- 2). If CIT takes a significant number of hours, how, in general, will MPD re-allocate its resources to make sure that response times for calls for service do not increase significantly?
- 3). Does MPD plan to increase overtime in order to accommodate more hours for training?
- 4). To avoid overtime, if necessary, will MPD consider reducing the huge number of officer initiated pretextual stops of drivers and pedestrians conducted every year?
- 5). The Fire and Police Commission annual reports analyzing the use of force for the years 2010-12 indicate that roughly 200,000 officer initiated stops took place each year. The 2013 annual analysis of use of force has not yet been released. What was the number of officer initiated stops in 2013 (calculated using the same method as previous reports)?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Once again, I applaud the Mayor and MPD for agreeing to expedite CIT. It is one of several specific reforms needed to enhance trust between police and all the communities they serve.

Sincerely yours,

Chris Ahmuty
Executive Director

cc: Ald. Coggs
Joanna Polanco