CITY OF MADISON

PCOB

POLICE CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT BOARD

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Statement from the Executive Committee of the Police Civilian Oversight Board Regarding Independent Police Monitor Glass

The Executive Committee of the Police Civilian Oversight Board (PCOB) is deeply concerned by the video showing Independent Police Monitor Aeiramique Glass being physically confronted and injured by Madison Police while carrying out her official oversight responsibilities.

The Office of the Independent Police Monitor exists to provide independent civilian oversight of policing in Madison. The Monitor's responsibilities include observing police operations, documenting officer conduct, identifying officers involved in critical incidents, and ensuring accountability through independent review. These responsibilities necessarily require the Monitor to be present at significant police events and to engage with officers while performing her duties. Monitor Glass was acting within the scope of her authority.

Several PCOB members of the Executive Committee were present at different times during or immediately following the incident. We witnessed firsthand the confusion, heightened tensions, and physical force that characterized the response. We also witnessed Monitor Glass continue attempting to fulfill her official responsibilities after she had been physically injured. It is important to mention that PCOB members who were present in an official observational capacity were also exposed to pepper spray while monitoring events.

If the official charged with independently overseeing police conduct can be physically injured while performing her lawful duties, every member of our community should ask what that means for residents who lack that visibility, authority, or institutional support. Civilian oversight exists precisely because accountability is most critical especially during moments of crisis.

Much of the public discussion has centered on comments Monitor Glass made immediately after the incident. We believe that focus has overshadowed the far more significant question of how the City's Independent Police Monitor came to be physically injured while carrying out her official responsibilities.

We recognize that Monitor Glass's words have generated concern. However, those remarks were made in the immediate aftermath of her being physically injured while attempting to perform her duties. For those who heard those comments firsthand and understood them as an

emotional and impassioned response to the circumstances; not as a literal call for violence or an attempt to incite others.

Context matters. Throughout history, expressions such as "burn it all down" have been widely understood as rhetorical metaphors used to express profound frustration with institutions perceived as unjust or unaccountable. They have appeared in political discourse, literature, journalism, and movements for social change as symbolic calls for systemic transformation rather than literal acts of destruction. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us in his Letter from Birmingham Jail that "freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed," recognizing that deep frustration often emerges when communities believe their concerns have gone unheard. James Baldwin similarly observed that "to be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a rage almost all the time," reflecting the emotional burden that systemic injustice can produce. These reflections do not endorse violence; rather, they acknowledge that powerful rhetoric has long been used to express anguish, urgency, and a demand for change.

We respectfully disagree with statements suggesting that Monitor Glass incited violence. Such characterizations fail to account for the context in which her remarks were made and risk diverting public attention from the events that precipitated them. Public officials, like all members of our community, deserve to have their words evaluated in their full context, particularly when spoken moments after sustaining physical injury while carrying out their official duties.
The more pressing concern is whether Madison's system of civilian oversight was able to function independently and safely during this incident. When the independence of the Monitor is compromised, public confidence in civilian oversight is compromised as well. The Office of the Independent Monitor was created to provide independent accountability during precisely these types of high-profile events. Any interference with that responsibility raises concerns not only about the safety of the Monitor, but about the integrity of Madison's oversight system as a whole.

Like many members of our community, we want a city where public demonstrations remain peaceful and where trust between law enforcement and the community continues to grow. That trust, however, cannot be built without transparency, accountability, and respect for the independence of civilian oversight.

The Executive Committee stands with Independent Police Monitor Glass and reaffirms its commitment to protecting the independence and integrity of civilian oversight. We call for a thorough, transparent, and independent review of the events surrounding this incident, including the circumstances that resulted in the Monitor's injury while carrying out the responsibilities entrusted to her by the people of Madison.

Civilian oversight is not an obstacle to public safety. It is an essential safeguard of public trust.

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