

# CHICAGO POLICE HISTORY OF REFORM ACCOUNTABILITY

## FOR THE THIRD TIME IN 14 YEARS, CHICAGO NEEDS TO OVERHAUL ITS POLICE OVERSIGHT SYSTEM.

WHAT CAN OUR PAST ATTEMPTS AT POLICE REFORM TELL US ABOUT WHAT THE CITY WILL NEED IN THE FUTURE?

### OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

ACRONYM  
CONVENED

**OPS**  
**1974**

BEFORE OPS, THE CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT (CPD) INTERNALLY INVESTIGATED POLICE MISCONDUCT, BUT A BLUE RIBBON PANEL FOUND THAT "COMPLAINTS FROM CITIZENS OF ABUSIVE CONDUCT BY POLICE ARE ALMOST UNIVERSALLY REJECTED BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENTS" AND RECOMMENDED THE CREATION OF AN "INDEPENDENT" OPS.

OPS WAS PART OF THE CPD. ITS CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR WAS APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR AND WORKED UNDER THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT.

DISMANTLED **2007**

DESPITE CLAIMING TO BE INDEPENDENT, OPS' DIRECT TIES TO THE CPD INEVITABLY LED THE OPS TO BE BIASED IN FAVOR OF THE POLICE THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE INVESTIGATING.

OPS'S ISSUES CAME TO A HEAD IN 2006, WHEN SPECIAL PROSECUTORS RELEASED A 292 PAGE REPORT DETAILING THE FULL EXTENT OF THE TORTURE CONDUCTED BY THE CPD UNDER POLICE COMMANDER JON BURGE.

### INDEPENDENT POLICE REVIEW AUTHORITY

**IPRA**  
**2007**

THE INDEPENDENT POLICE REVIEW AUTHORITY (IPRA) WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2007.

OTHER THAN THE NAME CHANGE, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW THE IPRA DIFFERED FROM THE OPS. IPRA'S CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR WAS STILL APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR AND IT INHERITED THE EXACT SAME STAFF FROM OPS. IPRA,

LIKE ITS PREDECESSOR, RARELY RECOMMEND DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST POLICE OFFICERS.

**2017**

IPRA'S FAILURES CAME TO THE FOREFRONT AFTER 17 YEAR OLD LAQUAN MCDONALD WAS SHOT 16 TIMES BY CHICAGO POLICE OFFICER JASON VAN DYKE ON OCTOBER 20, 2014.

THE CITY OF CHICAGO—IPRA—REFUSED TO PUBLICLY RELEASE POLICE DASHCAM FOOTAGE, BUT WAS EVENTUALLY ORDERED TO DO SO BY A JUDGE. FORMER MAYOR RAHM EMMANUEL APPOINTED A "POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY TASK FORCE" TO INVESTIGATE THE PROBLEMS IN THE CPD. THE TASK FORCE FOUND THAT IPRA "LACK[ED] TRUE INDEPENDENCE" AND WAS "NOT HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR [ITS] WORK."

IPRA HAD NOT INVESTIGATED 40% OF COMPLAINTS FILED - AND ITS "DISCIPLINARY RECOMMENDATIONS" WERE "REDUCED OR ELIMINATED...IN 73% OF CASES" IT DID INVESTIGATE.

### CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

**COPA**  
**2017**

THE POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY TASK FORCE CONCLUDED THAT IPRA SHOULD BE REPLACED "WITH A NEW AND FULLY TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE CIVILIAN POLICE INVESTIGATIVE AGENCY." IN OCTOBER 2016, THE CITY COUNCIL VOTED TO REPLACE THE IPRA WITH THE CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY (COPA).

COPA IS ABLE TO ACT INDEPENDENTLY, AS IT "HAS EXPLICIT ACCESS TO ALL INFORMATION IN THE POSSESSION OF THE POLICE."

**CURRENT**

THE CREATION OF COPA DID NOT CREATE A NEW FUNCTION OF POLICE OVERSIGHT. IT HAS THE SAME GENERAL JURISDICTION AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS IPRA, AND WITH COPA'S CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR IS STILL APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR. SOME HAVE RAISED CONCERN ABOUT SIMILARITIES BETWEEN COPA AND IPRA RELATED TO AN INDIRECT INFLUENCE FROM THE POLICE IT INVESTIGATES.

THE CITY OF CHICAGO IS DOING COPA NO FAVORS, AS IT CONTINUES TO ALLOW POLICE TO IGNORE REFORM EFFORTS. IN OCTOBER 2020, CPD CONSULTED WITH A USE OF FORCE COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP, INITIATED BY THE MAYOR AND THE POLICE SUPERINTENDENT. OUT OF THE GROUP'S 155 RECOMMENDATIONS, CPD ACCEPTED JUST 5.

NOVEMBER 2020

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