



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Black Lives Matter Cleveland & Citizens for a Safer Cleveland Issue Joint Statement
Opposing the End of the Consent Decree**

Cleveland, OH — Black Lives Matter Cleveland and Citizens for a Safer Cleveland issue this joint statement in response to the City of Cleveland’s announcement that it is preparing to exit federal oversight under the Consent Decree.

We are clear: Cleveland is not ready

Yesterday, we listened with heavy hearts and unwavering resolve as the City of Cleveland announced its supposed progress and its move out from under federal oversight. While they tout numbers—97% constitutional use of force, a 55% drop in force complaints, perfect investigations, minimal arrests during crisis interventions, and millions poured into training and oversight—these figures cannot hide the pain, the mistrust, and the broken bonds between our community and those sworn to protect us.

We acknowledge that these benchmarks reflect reforms that community members fought for following the 2014 U.S. Department of Justice finding that the Cleveland Division of Police engaged in a pattern and practice of excessive force. Behind these statistics lie stories of hurt and injustice that cannot be erased by numbers alone. Progress measured in data is hollow if it does not translate into real safety, dignity, and respect for our people—especially Black communities who have borne the brunt of systemic misconduct for generations. We know that mere compliance on paper does not erase the trauma inflicted on our brothers, sisters, and neighbors.

During the press conference, city leaders openly admitted that many residents “do not feel the change.” That admission matters.

These words cut deep because they reveal a painful truth: words and policies alone are insufficient. The same voices that cry out for justice—and have been ignored for too long—must be heard not just in words, but in action.

**BLACK
LIVES
216
MATTER**

**CITIZENS
FOR A SAFER
CLEVELAND**

When the leadership says they need “a different vehicle” for community engagement, it echoes the urgent need for transparency, genuine connection, trust, and transformative change. They claim bias-free policing is “embedded and institutionalized,” yet if those most impacted by police violence and misconduct do not feel safe, seen, or valued day after day, then their words mean nothing.

Reform is not just about language on paper—it must be reflected in how people are treated in their daily lives. It is about addressing the lived realities and restoring faith.

Our community has demanded transparency, justice, and genuine reform for years. We will keep demanding it. We will remain vigilant, holding the city accountable and listening to the voices most silenced—our Black neighbors, whose very lives have been impacted and endangered by unjust policing.

True safety begins with hope—hope rooted in housing, education, mental health, economic opportunity, and community investment. It is not found in metrics or promises alone. It is forged in the everyday fight for dignity, fairness, and respect.

Black Lives Matter Cleveland, and Citizens for a Safer Cleveland call for continued federal oversight until community trust indicators, civilian oversight capacity, and sustainable accountability structures are demonstrably strong and independently verified. The Consent Decree was born out of tragedy and systemic failure. Ending it prematurely risks eroding the fragile progress that has been made.

We stand unwavering. Our commitment is that reform must be permanent, trust must be rebuilt, and accountability is not optional.

We will keep fighting for justice, until every voice is heard and every life is valued.

Sincerely,

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