

DANE COUNTY CHIEFS OF POLICE ASSOCIATION

Chief James Olson, President
DeForest Police Department

Chief Troy Hellenbrand, Vice President
Middleton Police Department

Chief Mike Steffes, Past President
Sun Prairie Police Department



Asst. Chief Sara Deuman, Treasurer
Monona Police Department

Lt. Matthew Wagner, Secretary
Cottage Grove Police Department

July 5, 2022

The Honorable City of Madison Public Safety Review Committee
The Honorable City of Madison Alders

Dear Committee Members and Alders:

As President of the Dane County Chiefs of Police Association (DCCOPA), I am writing you to express our opposition to proposed Ordinance 5.17, an ordinance to prohibit the Madison Police Department and law enforcement agencies responding under mutual aid, from using CS gas, OC, impact projectiles or other chemical agents for the purposes of crowd control. DCCOPA represents members from over 30 law enforcement and emergency government agencies within Dane County, and our members are executives from agencies that are the most likely to field mutual aid requests from the Madison Police Department during an emergency.

If passed, this legislation would severely and adversely impact the ability of the other law enforcement agencies to respond to mutual aid requests by the Madison Police Department. I have shared the proposed ordinance with members of DCCOPA and have heard their collective voices indicating that they would no longer send officers to assist Madison Police in emergency crowd control situations if their officers were prohibited from using all of the necessary tools at their disposal. This proposed ordinance would not only become a barrier to effective partnerships within Dane County, but it would also unduly risk human lives and safety. Can you imagine violent protests occurring in Madison with no source of support for Madison Police, and the protesters involved knowing your officers' response capabilities and restrictions in advance? This misguided piece of legislation would not only endanger the lives of any law enforcement professional who was on the scene, but it would also endanger the lives of innocent civilians.

As we have seen in other communities across the country, when violent protestors infiltrate a crowd and encourage violence and extreme property damage, ineffective management and response can lead to catastrophic results. A component of addressing these situations sometimes requires the use of less lethal or chemical munitions, which can interrupt a crowd or their intended actions to cause harm or commit violence. DCCOPA has always promoted de-escalation and achieving compliance with the least amount of force necessary. Chemical munitions and impact projectiles are never utilized as a primary crowd management option. In many cases, these tools are only deployed following multiple efforts to gain voluntary compliance through de-escalation and other techniques. Eliminating less than lethal options for officers to consider during an emergency runs counter to our shared goals of preserving lives, protecting property, and ensuring that everyone's Constitutional Rights are protected.

Proposed Madison General Ordinance 5.17 would eliminate tools designed as alternatives and it would force officers towards more intrusive and injurious options. This proposal is alarming and should be a concern for every resident in Madison and Dane County.

Thank you for your consideration of our position on this critical issue.

Yours in service,

James Olson
President
Dane County Chiefs of Police Association