



Community Control Over Police

In Black communities, and other communities of color, the police often act and are received as an occupying force. Instead of protecting Black people in their own communities, the police are, ultimately, in those neighborhoods in order to protect others from Black people.

As such, while the police enjoy majority support among the general white population, the same cannot be said for the Black community or many other communities of color.

Any claim to democracy is firmly grounded in the informed consent of the governed, a concept rooted in international law and theories on democracy. Due to the particular racial and social history of the United States, we assert that the police operate inside of Black communities without the consent of the governed.

Community Control over Police is a proposition for real democracy.

By centering control over police in local communities, the intents and functions of democracy will be served as the police will exercise the will of community they serve.

PROCESS

A given municipality, city or town organizes itself into **policing districts** based on the existing social cohesion of neighborhoods and communities therein. These districts can overlap exactly, substantially or not at all with existing political boundaries, such as council districts.

Following sufficient public discussion, debate and information, **an election will allow residents of each district to give informed consent** to those charged with protecting them and endowed with the government sanctioned power to detain, arrest and even commit acts of violence, up to and including killing.

The election will empower residents of each district to either retain their existing police department or to replace that department with a police force that is democratically controlled by district residents. Much like voting for council members, district residents are empowered to determine the fate of their own district, but not others.

Those districts voting to retain their police continue service as usual. Those districts voting for community control begin the process of building a new force from the ground up, reflective of the priorities of that community. The existing police department will redraw its jurisdictional maps accordingly.

Funding for the new force(s) comes from the exact same taxpayer and grant sources as the existing department. The existing police budget is divided among the partitioned districts and amounts are allocated towards each district **based on the actual police resources used** prior to the election.

That is to say, districts with high crime rates necessitating constant patrolling and more arrests, by definition utilize a greater percentage of police resources. Those resources remain in that district after the vote. Similarly, state, federal or foundation grants secured by the existing department based on the needs of a particular district, remain with that district after the vote.

For example, if a local police department secures federal grants for extra police, additional weapons, new technology and used military equipment based on the statistical profile of a low-income Black community, those resources gained for that community should remain there after the vote. Securing funds for a struggling low-income Black community and then shifting it for the benefit of the business district or a wealthy enclave is stealing from the poor.

COMMUNITY POLICE CONTROL BOARD

The new force is run by the Community Police Control Board (CPCB).

The CPCB has the power and authority to set **priorities**, establish **policy** and enforce good **practice** in the force. The board meets on a regular basis to evaluate and adjust priorities and policies, as well as deal with issues of practice and implementation, upto and including firing individual officers. As strong supporters of human, worker and civil rights, all personnel decisions are subject to due process and fair labor practices.

The CPCB is comprised of 12 adult human residents of the district. CPCB terms can be 2 years in duration, with staggered seating so that the entire board is not replaced all at once.

Members of the CPCB are seated via **random selection** or **sortition** from a combination of voter rolls, driver licenses, public utility records, public benefit (social security, etc.) records or any other records that confirm residence.

Sortition is a democratic and egalitarian governing structure that ensures all residents have an equal chance of entering office irrespective of any bias in society or preferences of corporate or other interests. For example, while just over 3% of the American population has a net worth of more than \$1 million, over 50% of the 538 members of the US Congress are millionaires. Sortition will improve the chances of ordinary people to exercise their democratic rights.

Sortition also minimizes opportunities for corruption, as political cliques and entrenched interests have difficulty forming and corporate sponsorship of officials is not possible.

Sortition is used in small scale in a number of municipalities around the world, including several Canadian cities. Sortition is also the basis for the American jury system, where unelected individuals, selected at random, determine guilt, innocence and punishments, including death, of those the government accuses of breaking the law.

In order to facilitate, and even encourage, participation, selected members can be provided with transportation, childcare, meals, personal assistants and even modest stipends among other accommodations.

POWERS

The primary powers of the CPCB is setting priorities, establishing policies and enforcing good practices of the force.

Pursuant to the faithful execution of its duties, the CPCB has the power to hire force staff, legal counsel, assistants and even a chief for day to day management.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

State legislative authority for community control over police can be derived from one of two sources:

State Statute **62.13(1)** allows cities to create police and fire boards comprised of five members appointed by the mayor. Utilization of this statute requires a two step process.

First, for the members of the board, even though endowed with the power to appoint, most mayors make appointments based on recommendations from council members, staff, friends and even lobbyists. This recommendation process can be formalized with a city ordinance compelling the mayor to select board members from among sitting members of a local CPCB, or at least one from each CPCB in existence and others at the will of the mayor. Second, the board will have to agree to limit their range of directives in order to allow the CPCB their full range of prescribed powers.

State Statute **62.13(2e)** allows cities to forgo the traditional police department and accompanying board in favor of a Combined Protective Services department that can perform police and other public safety functions. State Statutes allow this department, or departments, broader latitude in terms of organizational structure and decision making process.

A number of villages in Wisconsin, such as the village of Menomonee Falls, WI, use Combined Protective Services departments in lieu of traditional police departments.