

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-urges-toledo-leadership-reject-jeff-sessions-violent-crime-initiative>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

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TOLEDO, OH In June 2017 the Department of Justice (DOJ) created the National Public Safety Partnership (PSP) a program purportedly aimed to aid 12 cities in fighting crime, drug trafficking, and gang violence. Toledo was one of the 12 cities selected to receive significant assistance. For months the ACLU of Ohio has spoken out against this partnership, and today Attorney General Jeff Sessions is in Toledo to give a speech on violent crime. The ACLU urges outgoing Mayor Hicks-Hudson and Mayor-elect Kapszukiewicz to formally withdraw from the DOJ initiative before it erodes criminal justice reform and public trust in Toledo.

Under this administration, the DOJ has initiated a number of alarming changes that are damaging and counter-productive for the public's well-being, said Mike Brickner, senior policy director with the ACLU of Ohio. Harsh penalties for drug possession, investment in private prisons, and local enforcement of immigration policies all undermine police-community relationships and continue to rely on failed tough on crime policies of the past, added Brickner.

Toledo has been a leader in reforming its criminal justice system, notably through its participation in the MacArthur Safety and Justice Challenge. Instituting policies advanced by the DOJ could seriously jeopardize the progress we've seen in Toledo, noted Brickner.

This is merely Sessions' latest attempt to bring back outdated, harmful War on Drugs-style policies. Mayor Hicks-Hudson has an opportunity to dump this deal before she leaves office, and if not, Mayor-elect Kapszukiewicz must make it his first priority, concluded Brickner.

The Community Solidarity Response Network plans to hold a protest at 3pm today to demonstrate their opposition to Jeff Sessions and his latest tactic.

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