

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Read [the summary](#) of the DOJ-City of Cleveland Consent Decree.

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(large pdf)

Check out [our recommendations](#) for Cleveland police reforms.

CLEVELANDThe American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio has issued a statement following the release of the U.S. Department of Justices (DOJ) consent decree with the city of Cleveland. The settlement came as a response to the DOJ investigation of the 2012 shooting deaths of Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams and its subsequent findings on Cleveland Police Department practices, in particular its excessive use of force on people of color.

This is a step forward, but this is truly only the beginning, said Christine Link, executive director of the ACLU of Ohio. To change the culture of the police force, which has been engaged in unfair and unjust treatment of people of color for so long, will not happen overnight. It will take a strong and vibrant partnership with community members based on respect and trust, as well as the resolve of officials to not allow discrimination and unconstitutional practices fester within the Cleveland Police Department any longer."

The ACLU of Ohio had previously made recommendations to the DOJ and city officials on policies it should include in the consent decree, many of which are present in the final agreement. In addition to robust community involvement, other ACLU recommendations that are present include: better data collection; increased transparency; strengthened accountability through civilian review boards and an inspector general; addressing discriminatory policing; preventing unconstitutional stop, searches and seizures; assessing equipment needs of law enforcement officers; and long term oversight of the department.

The ACLU will continue to work with U.S. Department of Justice, community groups, and the government to move toward a police department that is fair, restrained and committed to protecting the lives of all people. The ACLUs goal is to help build community-police partnerships with the shared goals of equality, fairness, and justice to ensure public safety.

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