



CENTER FOR DISPUTE
SETTLEMENT
peace it together

May 26, 2015

To Whom it May Concern;

**Re: Letter of Support for Implementation of a Body-Worn Camera (BWC)
Program by the Rochester Police Department (RPD)**

The Center for Dispute Settlement (The Center) has a long history of involvement in the police/community relations arena in Rochester and Monroe County. Our programs have evolved over the past thirty-five (35) years. The goal of the police/community relations programs has always been to help bring about a better relationship between the community and law enforcement by providing civilian oversight to local police agencies, police complaint and compliment intake services, and conciliation opportunities between citizens and officers. The Center and its volunteer mediators and fact-finders play an important role in building bridges between the community and the police.

At the Center, we recognize the importance of a positive relationship between law enforcement and members of the community. Because members of law enforcement have a high level of public contact, complaints and misunderstandings may arise. In an effort to proactively address complaints, build community trust, and establish long-term positive partnerships between the community and members of law enforcement, the Center offers a number of highly specialized Civilian Oversight Programs.

The purpose of the **Rochester Civilian Review Board (CRB)** is to review and make recommendations on completed internal affairs investigations of alleged misconduct by employees of the Rochester Police Department. Each review panel consists of three (3) individuals who are selected on a rotating basis from a pool of qualified city resident mediators of varied ethnic, racial, age and gender backgrounds. The panelists have received extensive training in their role as an impartial reviewer as well as policies and procedures of the Rochester Police Department and Civil Rights protections for citizens. Panelists review investigations of each citizen complaint for thoroughness, fairness and timeliness and submit their findings directly to the Chief of Police. The panel then submits findings to the Chief of Police along with any investigative, policy, or remedial training recommendations to accomplish these goals.

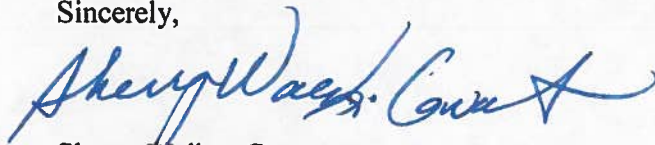
Police Conciliation Mediation (PCON) is a voluntary, confidential process offered to a citizen and Rochester Police Officer to informally resolve the issues contained in a citizen complaint. The meeting, conducted by a trained Center mediator in a neutral environment, is private, confidential and free. Both parties will have the opportunity to bring closure to the incident by clarifying each other's perspectives and the circumstances surrounding the incident. The nature of the allegation against the

officer must not involve a use of force, criminal activity, or other serious procedural matters. If the conciliation should fail, the citizen maintains the right to request an investigation of their complaint.

An RPD BWC program may help improve the quality of interactions between police officers and civilian members of the community. Accordingly, we support the implementation of BWC program by RPD and are fully prepared to incorporate this DME into our existing Civilian Oversight programs to assist in fairly reviewing and/or conciliating these complaints. We recognize that this program will produce digital multi-media evidence (DME) that will be relevant to complaints of police misconduct including excessive force, discourtesy, and others.

We look forward to working with RPD to ensure the establishment of sound procedures and protocols to utilize the BWC program to promote our overall goal to help bring about a better relationship between the community and law enforcement.

Sincerely,



Sherry Walker-Cowart
President & CEO