

Denver Justice Project
1600 N. Downing St
Denver, CO 80219

August 3, 2021

Dear Denver City Council,

The Denver Justice Project (“DJP”) writes in support of the measures Councilwomen Torres, Gilmore, and Kniech have outlined to strengthen the Office of the Independent Monitor which include: establishing the Citizen Oversight Board as the authority to appoint the Independent Monitor, providing the Office of the Independent Monitor (“OIM”) the authority to hire an independent general counsel, and giving the employees of the OIM the security of Career Service status. We voice our support for the appointment authority and structural changes to the Office of the Independent Monitor.

DJP is an advocacy organization whose mission is to partner with historically marginalized communities to create meaningful improvement in people’s lives. By working diligently to transform the way our communities are policed, and by rethinking what community health, safety and racial justice looks like. DJP is a crucial resource for community members who’ve traditionally been disenfranchised by the criminal justice system to proactively engage and advocate for change. As a grassroots organization, DJP has seen major success in strengthening and supporting the OIM over the last five years. Through DJP’s action-based network, it was able to codify the OIM into the Denver City Council charter in 2016 and brought forward amendments in 2018.

Currently, DJP supports the measures to strengthen the OIM even more so by providing independent counsel and career service protection for OIM employees. Many of these recommendations sprouted from a community task force that was created after the death and aftermath of George Floyd’s murder. The task force’s primary goal was to reimagine public safety in Denver. After an incredible nine months of weekly meetings, the task force proposed 112 recommendations to the Denver City Council. Though the new measures do not reflect the exact language and expectations of the task force, they embody the spirit and goal of decentralizing the mayoral control over the hiring process for the independent monitor and protecting OIM staff from political upheaval. Since the initial proposal, DJP has worked collaboratively with the task force, city council, and the OIM to institute structural and charter changes to the OIM.

Denver City Council has always assisted since inception of this office in strengthening the OIM and law enforcement oversight and accountability. We appreciate the work that Councilmembers have done to update OIM practices and structure and believe these reforms will create a new level of transparency between citizens and their government. We urge you to support these changes to make the OIM more independent and more effective, reflecting Denver’s commitment to ensuring all citizen’s safety is protected.

Sincerely,
Gianina Horton, Executive Director
Alexander Landau, Co-Founder