



August 29, 2019

Dear Friend,

There is no greater duty for anyone elected to represent and serve the public than to ensure that our communities are safe. While we tend to think almost exclusively about the Boston Police Department (BPD) when considering public safety, the truth is this responsibility is shared professionally by others – specifically the Boston Fire Department (BFD) and Boston Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Because we give these groups literal power over life and death the only way they can carry out their duties effectively is if the public has trust and confidence in them. Therefore oversight of our public safety agencies is critical.

Currently the city operates the [Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel](#) (CO-OP), tasked with reviewing select appeals for BPD internal investigations cases. The current state of the CO-OP, which has two active members of a possible five, is simply inadequate to fully meet its oversight mandate. [The CO-OP said as much in making recommendations to the Mayor in 2015](#). Because of this many residents, especially those in black and brown communities that have had historically strained relationships with public safety agencies, lack confidence in the process and its transparency. As residents of Boston this is unacceptable.

I believe that most of these recommendations, particularly those around providing staff and increased operational funding for the CO-OP, should be implemented. I disagree with the recommendations around investigations and think that a more empowered CO-OP should have fully independent investigative powers – not just in select cases. I would also expand the mandate of the CO-OP to include BFD and EMS as well, and add members with understanding of those fields. In this way Boston can demonstrate a true commitment to greater transparency and confidence in all public safety interactions.

These recommendations are not meant as an attack on Boston's public safety personnel, who take on dangerous duties every day to protect our city and those in it. Instead, they are meant to provide another tool to create a stronger connection between these departments and all of our communities. In doing so we commit to increasing the most important component of public safety – trust – which is critical to making sure that everyone is as safe as possible, whether they wear a badge or not.

I look forward to hearing your feedback on this important issue. Reach out to us on social media using "@VoteHalbert" and at info@davidhalbert.com.

Thank you.

- David