

December 4, 2013

I have had an opportunity to review Mayor Condon's proposed ordinance making changes to Spokane's Office of the Police Ombudsman. As an experienced police oversight executive, I see a lot to be positive about with this ordinance. The independence of the Police Ombudsman is clearly strengthened by his ability to request further investigation when he considers it necessary, and even ask the Commission to compel the Police Department to conduct additional investigation. As an independent oversight professional, the Police Ombudsman will have full and unrestricted access to complaint investigations as they are being conducted and even participate in interviews and ask questions of those being interviewed. Access such as this is rare for independent oversight officials. It will undoubtedly strengthen Spokane's oversight system. Finally, I am encouraged by the power given the Commission to initiate an independent, third party investigation when they consider it necessary and publish the results. In such cases, this transparency will enable the citizens of Spokane and their elected representatives to hold the Police Chief accountable when necessary and the opportunity to make needed changes to prevent problems in the future.

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