

# ACLU of Wisconsin: Criticizes Passage of Policing Bills That Hamper Police Oversight, Provide More Funding For Law Enforcement

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MADISON — The ACLU of Wisconsin criticized two policing bills that were passed in the Wisconsin State Senate yesterday that would diminish the capacity for independent police oversight, as well as unnecessarily provide additional tax dollars to law enforcement.

Senate Bill 117 would change the structure of the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission and the Madison Police and Fire Commission, allowing police unions, in some situations, to appoint members to each of those bodies, while Senate Bill 124 would add money to police budgets to pay for police houses.

“Police unions should not be able to appoint members to the organizations charged with police oversight, let alone have an automatic spot on the three-member panel that decides on complaints and assesses discipline against police officers. It’s a clear conflict of interest. They also shouldn’t have the authority to add a representative to the Commission without Common Council or executive oversight no matter the situation,” said Tomás Clasen, community engagement manager of the ACLU of Wisconsin. “Additionally, the proposed changes to judicial review of FPC decisions give disciplined officers an unfettered second bite at the apple. A disciplined officer gets an opportunity to relitigate the hearing before a court, while the disciplining authority cannot appeal a decision to not impose discipline. Also,

the requirement that the Commission's employees be 'nonpartisan' appears to be an unjustified and potentially unconstitutional intrusion on public employees' rights to political association."

"We're also opposed to Senate Bill 124, which creates a mechanism to give grants to cities to purchase police houses. Police houses just provide an additional, unnecessary police presence in communities that are currently targeted by police," Clasen said. "We need to shift resources out of police departments and into communities of color, which have historically endured the greatest harms from underinvestment in non-punitive resources, and overinvestment in policing and other tools that funnel people into the criminal legal system."

This release is available online at: <https://www.aclu-wi.org/en/news/aclu-wisconsin--criticizes-passage-policing-bills-hamper-police-oversight-provide-more-funding>