

CLEVELAND COMMUNITY POLICE COMMISSION

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Chief U.S. District Judge Solomon Oliver Jr. on Friday denied the joint motion filed by the City of Cleveland and the U.S. Department of Justice to end the federal Consent Decree overseeing reforms within the Cleveland Division of Police.

In a 74-page ruling, Judge Oliver called the request to terminate the Consent Decree “premature,” concluding that the City has not yet demonstrated sustained and measurable progress sufficient to ensure constitutional policing reforms can be maintained without federal oversight.

The Cleveland Community Police Commission (CPC) has consistently maintained that while Cleveland has made meaningful progress over the last decade, the true test is whether those reforms are durable, institutionalized, and capable of being sustained over time.

“Real reform is not measured only by whether policies exist on paper, but whether accountability, transparency, supervision, and constitutional policing practices are consistently demonstrated over time,” CPC Co-Chair John Adams said.

In his ruling, Judge Oliver emphasized that the Consent Decree “is not a checklist,” but rather “a framework for systemic change.” While the City argued it had achieved compliance in several core areas — including use of force, crisis intervention, and search and seizure — the Court noted that other provisions of the agreement remain equally important to achieving lasting constitutional policing reforms.

The Court also raised concerns that compliance in several key areas has not yet been sustained long enough to justify ending federal oversight. The ruling highlighted ongoing questions surrounding supervision, accountability systems, bias-free policing, community and problem-oriented policing, and the operational readiness of local oversight structures.

The CPC appreciates the time and consideration the Court devoted to a decision with significant implications for policing, accountability, and public trust in Cleveland and believes Friday’s ruling provides an opportunity to continue strengthening the systems and relationships necessary to sustain constitutional policing long-term.

“This ruling gives the City, the Division of Police, and oversight bodies the chance to continue building a system the public can genuinely trust,” CPC Co-Chair Sharena Zayed said. “The goal should not simply be to end federal oversight, but to ensure constitutional policing has become embedded within the culture and operations of the department itself. The Consent Decree should end because Cleveland has truly earned that trust — not because enough boxes have been checked.”

The CPC remains committed to working collaboratively with the City of Cleveland, the Cleveland Division of Police, the Monitoring Team, the Office of Professional Standards, the Civilian Police Review Board, and community stakeholders to strengthen police accountability systems and ensure the City is positioned for long-term success.

“Civilian oversight should not be viewed as an obstacle to progress,” Co-Chair Zayed said. “It is part of the infrastructure that helps build legitimacy, accountability, and public confidence. We all share the same goal: a safer Cleveland where residents and officers alike can thrive under systems that are fair, transparent, and trusted by the community.”

The Court has scheduled a status conference for June 4, during which parties are expected to provide updates on several outstanding issues, including the City’s relationship with the CPC and ongoing efforts to strengthen local accountability systems.

Like always, the Commission’s focus remains on building effective and sustainable systems of accountability — not institutional conflict. While disagreements may arise throughout the reform process, the CPC remains committed to collaboration, mediation, and productive solutions that strengthen civilian oversight, build public trust, and advance constitutional policing in Cleveland.

The CPC hopes to continue working closely with the City and all stakeholders moving forward, including being meaningfully included in future community outreach and public safety discussions related to the Consent Decree and the future of police accountability in Cleveland.