

Police Accountability & Constitutional Policing

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POLICY DOCUMENT 36: POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY & CONSTITUTIONAL POLICING

**Dave Biggers for
Louisville Mayor 2025**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisville stands at a crossroads. The murder of Breonna Taylor in 2020 exposed systemic failures in our police department that led to a Department of Justice investigation finding a pattern of unconstitutional policing. While the federal consent decree process was dismissed in May 2025, the problems it identified remain. Louisville must choose: return to the status quo that cost lives and eroded trust, or build a police department that serves all residents with dignity, accountability, and constitutional policing.

Dave Biggers believes policing must be **effective AND constitutional**. These are not competing values. Communities with accountable, trusted police departments are safer because residents cooperate with law enforcement. When communities don't trust police, crimes go unreported, witnesses don't come forward, and safety suffers

for everyone.

The Challenge

The DOJ's March 2023 findings documented pervasive problems:

1. **Unconstitutional Use of Force:** Officers used unjustified force, including striking people who weren't resisting, using neck restraints, and deploying K-9s excessively.
2. **Discriminatory Policing:** Black residents disproportionately subjected to stops, searches, citations, and force—not explained by crime rates or other factors.
3. **Unlawful Search Warrant Practices:** Deficient warrant applications, failure to knock-and-announce, insufficient post-search documentation—the very issues that led to Breonna Taylor's death.
4. **First Amendment Violations:** Retaliation against people who criticized or recorded police, unlawful arrests during protests.
5. **Failure to Investigate Misconduct:** Internal investigations routinely incomplete, biased toward officers, missing key evidence.

Dave's Vision

Dave will implement comprehensive police accountability reforms that exceed the dismissed consent decree:

Independent Civilian Oversight Board (\$2M annually):

True independence with subpoena power, investigative authority, and binding disciplinary recommendations.

Use of Force Reforms (\$1M annually): De-escalation requirements, ban on chokeholds and no-knock warrants, early intervention systems identifying problem officers.

Transparency & Data (\$500K annually): Body

camera requirements, public data dashboards, open misconduct records.

Constitutional Policing Training (\$1.5M annually):

De-escalation, implicit bias, mental health crisis response, community policing.

Community Accountability (\$500K annually): Regular community forums, precinct advisory councils, restorative justice alternatives.

Budget Impact

This policy requires **\$5.5 million in new annual spending**—funded through reallocation from settlement costs (Louisville has paid \$50M+ in misconduct settlements), federal grants, and operational efficiencies from reduced misconduct incidents.

Why This Matters

Accountability makes policing more effective. When communities trust police, they report crimes and cooperate as witnesses. When they don't, crimes go unsolved and violence increases. Chicago's police accountability reforms correlated with increased witness cooperation and case clearance rates.

Accountability protects taxpayers. Louisville has paid over \$50 million in settlements for police misconduct. Every dollar spent on prevention saves multiple dollars in lawsuits.

Accountability protects officers. Early intervention systems identify officers struggling before misconduct occurs. Training in de-escalation keeps officers safer.

Justice demands it. Breonna Taylor. Tae-Rone Simpson. David McAtee. Louisville families deserve a police department that values all lives equally.

CURRENT

SITUATION: LOUISVILLE'S POLICING CRISIS

DOJ Investigation Findings (March 2023)

The Department of Justice conducted a comprehensive investigation from April 2021 to March 2023, finding that Louisville Metro and LMPD:

Use of Force: – Used unjustified neck restraints – Struck people in the head with impact weapons when not warranted – Deployed police dogs against people who were not resisting – Used less-lethal weapons inappropriately – Failed to intervene when witnessing misconduct

Search Warrants: – Sought warrants with false or inaccurate information – Failed to properly knock and announce – Did not adequately document warrant executions – Had no policies ensuring accountability

Traffic Stops: – Conducted stops without reasonable suspicion – Disproportionately stopped Black drivers – Searched vehicles without legal justification – Made pretextual stops for minor violations to investigate unrelated matters

Discrimination: – Black residents subject to discriminatory enforcement – Racial disparities not explained by crime rates – Bias in stop, search, arrest, and use of force decisions

First Amendment: – Arrested people for protected speech (criticizing police) – Interfered with people recording police – Unlawfully dispersed protesters – Retaliated against journalists

Internal Accountability: – Misconduct investigations inadequate – Ignored or discredited civilian complaints – Failed to identify patterns of officer misconduct – Discipline inconsistent and inadequate

What Happened to the Consent Decree

In December 2024, Louisville signed a consent decree with 81 key objectives covering use of force, search warrants, traffic stops, and misconduct investigations. The agreement was to be overseen by a federal

judge and independent monitor, with the current administration committing to compliance within 5 years.

However, on May 21, 2025, the DOJ under the new administration dismissed the lawsuit with prejudice, ending federal oversight before implementation began.

The current administration announced a “Community Commitment” to continue reforms voluntarily. While LMPD has revised 260+ policies, without federal oversight and an independent monitor, there’s no external accountability for actual implementation.

Why Voluntary Reform Is Insufficient

History shows police departments don’t reform themselves:

1. **No enforcement mechanism:** Voluntary commitments can be abandoned when political winds shift
2. **No independent oversight:** Internal review of police misconduct has inherent conflicts
3. **No public accountability:** Without required reporting, the community can’t verify progress
4. **Policy vs. practice:** Written policies mean nothing without enforcement

Louisville needs binding accountability, not promises.

DAVE’S VISION: ACCOUNTABLE, CONSTITUTIONAL POLICING

Dave Biggers believes **effective policing requires community trust**, and **community trust requires accountability**. This isn’t anti-police—it’s pro-community AND pro-good-officers who are tarnished by colleagues’ misconduct.

Core Principles

1. **Independence:** Oversight must be independent of the police department and mayor’s office

2. **Authority:** Oversight bodies must have real power—subpoenas, investigations, discipline
3. **Transparency:** Data and decisions must be public by default
4. **Community Voice:** Those most affected by policing must have meaningful input
5. **Prevention:** Identify problems before they become crises

Goals (4-Year Term)

By 2029, Dave will achieve:

- **Independent Civilian Oversight Board** with subpoena power and binding disciplinary authority
- **50% reduction in use-of-force incidents** through de-escalation training and early intervention
- **Zero no-knock warrants** executed except for imminent threat to life
- **100% body camera compliance** with footage publicly accessible
- **Public misconduct database** searchable by officer
- **Quarterly community accountability forums** in every Metro Council district
- **Reduced racial disparities** in stops, searches, arrests, and force

DETAILED PROPOSALS

Proposal

1: Independent Civilian Oversight Board (\$2M Annually)

What It Is

Louisville will establish a truly independent Civilian Oversight Board (COB) with:

Structural Independence: – Board members appointed

by Metro Council (not Mayor or Police Chief) – Appointed from community nominations – No current or former LMPD employees – Must include representatives from communities most affected by policing – 5-year staggered terms; removal only for cause

Investigative Authority: – Subpoena

power to compel documents and testimony ([NACOLE Best Practices](#))

– Independent investigators (not former LMPD) – Access to all records, body camera footage, internal affairs files – Authority to initiate investigations without complaint – Authority to investigate patterns and policies, not just individual incidents

Disciplinary Authority: – Binding recommendations on discipline (Chief must implement or explain in writing) – Authority to overturn inadequate internal discipline – Public reporting of all disciplinary outcomes – Tracking of discipline by officer, type, and outcome

Policy Authority: – Review and approve all use-of-force policies before implementation – Authority to mandate policy changes – Annual audit of department policies and practices

Why It Matters

Research shows civilian oversight is only effective when boards have real power:

- NACOLE survey: 38 of 64 oversight bodies have no investigative authority; 30 can't issue subpoenas
- Boards without subpoena power “can be stonewalled and denied access to critical documents”
- The most effective oversight bodies are “adequately funded, granted subpoena power, and equipped with full investigatory and disciplinary power”

Louisville's current Citizens Commission on Police

Accountability lacks these powers. It can only review completed internal investigations and make non-binding recommendations.

Budget

Annual Cost: \$2 million

- Board operations and staff: \$1.2M (Executive Director, 4 investigators, admin support)

- Legal support: \$400K (enforcement of subpoenas, legal review)
- Technology and systems: \$200K (case management, data analysis)
- Community engagement: \$200K (forums, translation, accessibility)

Implementation

Year 1 (2026): – Metro Council passes enabling ordinance with full powers – Appoint initial board members through community nomination process – Hire Executive Director and initial staff – Establish policies and procedures

Year 2-4 (2027-2029): – Full operations: All serious incidents reviewed – Pattern investigations initiated – Policy reviews completed – Public reporting established

Proposal 2: Use of Force Reforms (\$1M Annually)

What It Is

Comprehensive reforms ensuring force is used only when necessary, at the minimum level required, with full accountability.

Policy Reforms:

De-Escalation Requirement: – Officers must attempt de-escalation before using force when feasible – Documented in every use-of-force report – Failure to de-escalate is policy violation subject to discipline

Force Continuum: – Clear, graduated levels of force tied to specific threat levels – Require lowest effective level of force – Prohibit escalation without corresponding threat increase

Prohibited Tactics: – **Chokeholds and neck restraints:** Banned except where deadly force would be authorized – **No-knock warrants:** Banned except where there is imminent threat to life requiring immediate entry (requires Chief approval and COB notification) – **Shooting at moving vehicles:** Banned except where vehicle is weapon and no alternative – **Warning shots:** Prohibited

Duty to Intervene: – Officers must intervene to stop excessive force by colleagues – Failure to intervene is discipline equivalent to using excessive force – Protection from retaliation for intervening

Early Intervention System: – Track use-of-force incidents, complaints, lawsuits by officer – Automatic review when officer exceeds thresholds – Mandatory intervention (training, counseling, reassignment) before termination needed – Identify and address problems before they become crises

Accountability: – All use-of-force incidents documented within 24 hours – Supervisor review within 48 hours – Serious force (injury, weapon discharge) reviewed by chain of command AND COB – Annual public report on use-of-force statistics

Evidence Base

Research shows de-escalation training reduces use of force:

- Seattle PD: De-escalation training reduced use of force 15% and injuries to officers 11%
- Las Vegas Metro: De-escalation program reduced officer-involved shootings 36%
- Studies show de-escalation makes officers safer, not less safe

Early intervention systems identify problem officers before serious misconduct:

- Phoenix PD: EIS identified officers who would later have sustained complaints with 70% accuracy
- New Orleans: EIS-flagged officers 3x more likely to have subsequent complaints if not intervened upon

Budget

Annual Cost: \$1 million

- Early intervention system technology: \$300K
- Policy development and legal review: \$200K
- Use-of-force review unit (3 FTE): \$350K
- Data analysis and reporting: \$150K

Proposal 3: Transparency & Data (\$500K Annually)

What It Is

Comprehensive transparency ensuring the public can verify accountability.

Body Camera Requirements: – 100% of uniformed officers equipped – Cameras activated for all law enforcement activities – Footage retained minimum 180 days; 3 years for use-of-force or complaints – Footage available to subjects of encounters within 7 days upon request – Footage publicly released within 30 days for serious incidents

Public Data Dashboard: – Real-time data on stops, searches, arrests, use of force – Disaggregated by race, geography, time, officer – Searchable by public – Updated weekly

Misconduct Database: – All sustained complaints public and searchable – Officer discipline history accessible – Settlement payments tracked and reported – Prevents problem officers from hiding history

Open Records: – All department policies publicly posted – Training curricula available – Internal affairs procedures transparent – Budget and spending detail accessible

Budget

Annual Cost: \$500,000

- Dashboard development and maintenance: \$200K
 - Body camera program expansion: \$150K
 - Records management and FOIA compliance: \$100K
 - Data analysis staff: \$50K
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Proposal

4: Constitutional Policing Training (\$1.5M Annually)

What It Is

Comprehensive training ensuring every officer knows constitutional limits and has skills to police effectively within them.

De-Escalation Training (40 hours annually): – Crisis communication – Tactical repositioning – Time and distance – Recognizing mental health crises – Scenario-based exercises

Implicit Bias Training (16 hours annually): – Understanding how bias affects decision-making – Strategies to counteract bias – Data on Louisville’s racial disparities – Accountability for biased policing

Mental Health Crisis Response (24 hours annually): – Recognizing mental health emergencies – De-escalation specific to mental health – Coordination with Crisis Intervention Team – Alternatives to arrest for mental health calls

Constitutional Law (16 hours annually): – Fourth Amendment (search and seizure) – First Amendment (free speech, recording police) – Fourteenth Amendment (equal protection) – Case law updates

Community Policing (16 hours annually): – Procedural justice (treating people fairly) – Community engagement techniques – Problem-oriented policing – Building trust in diverse communities

Budget

Annual Cost: \$1.5 million

- Training development and delivery: \$800K
- Outside trainers and experts: \$300K
- Overtime for training attendance: \$300K
- Materials and facilities: \$100K

Proposal 5:

Community Accountability (\$500K Annually)

What It Is

Structures ensuring community voice in policing priorities and practices.

Precinct Advisory Councils: – Elected residents from each LMPD division – Monthly meetings with division commanders – Input on priorities, deployment, problem areas – Review of division-level data

Quarterly Community Forums: – Public forums in each Metro Council district – Chief and command staff attend – Community questions and concerns heard – Public reporting on responses to prior concerns

Restorative Justice Alternatives: – For eligible offenses, option for restorative process instead of prosecution – Victim-offender dialogue facilitated by trained mediators – Restitution and community service – Reduced recidivism compared to traditional prosecution

Youth Police Relations: – Youth advisory council to COB – School resource officer accountability – Programs building positive relationships before enforcement contact

Budget

Annual Cost: \$500,000

- Precinct advisory council support: \$150K
- Community forum coordination: \$100K
- Restorative justice program: \$200K
- Youth programs: \$50K

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Year 1 (2026): Foundation

- Pass COB ordinance with full powers

- Ban no-knock warrants (except imminent threat)
- Implement duty to intervene policy
- Begin de-escalation training program
- Launch body camera compliance initiative

Year 2 (2027): Build Capacity

- COB fully operational
- Early intervention system deployed
- Public data dashboard launched
- All officers complete initial training curriculum
- Precinct advisory councils established

Year 3 (2028): Full Implementation

- 100% body camera compliance achieved
- Misconduct database searchable
- Restorative justice program launched
- Pattern investigations by COB
- First annual accountability report

Year 4 (2029): Measure Results

- Evaluate use-of-force trends (target: 50% reduction)
- Assess racial disparity data (target: measurable reduction)
- Community trust surveys
- Adjust policies based on outcomes
- Model for other cities

BUDGET SUMMARY

Component	Annual Cost
Civilian Oversight Board	\$2,000,000
Use of Force Reforms	\$1,000,000
Transparency & Data	\$500,000
Constitutional Policing Training	\$1,500,000

Component	Annual Cost
Community Accountability	\$500,000
TOTAL	\$5,500,000

Funding Sources: – Settlement cost reduction: \$2M
(Louisville pays \$5-10M annually in misconduct settlements) – Federal grants (DOJ COPS, BJA): \$1.5M – General fund reallocation: \$2M

Return on Investment: – Reduced settlements save \$2-5M annually – Improved clearance rates (community cooperation) – Reduced officer injuries and turnover – Avoided federal oversight costs

WHY THIS MATTERS

For Breonna Taylor. Her death exposed systemic failures that remain unaddressed. Louisville owes her family—and all families—a police department that values life and follows the Constitution.

For all Louisville residents. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their community AND safe from unconstitutional policing. These are not competing values.

For good police officers. The majority of officers serve honorably. They deserve a department where misconduct is identified and addressed, not one where bad actors tarnish everyone.

For Louisville's future. Cities with accountable, trusted police departments are safer and more prosperous. Young people and businesses choose communities where everyone is treated fairly.

Dave Biggers will build a Louisville Police Department that is effective, constitutional, and accountable to the community it serves.

SOURCES

- [Louisville DOJ Consent Decree Announcement](#)
 - [DOJ Louisville Investigation Findings](#)
 - [NACOLE Subpoena Power Best Practices](#)
 - [Council on Criminal Justice – Civilian Oversight Evidence](#)
 - [DOJ Family Justice Center Best Practices](#)
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What This Means for YOUR Neighborhood

Every Louisville neighborhood is unique. Enter your ZIP code to see how this policy directly impacts your community:

Find Your Mini Substation

Enter your ZIP code to see when your neighborhood will receive a community police substation.

Find My Substation

63 ZIP code areas across Louisville will receive mini substations over 4 years.

Part of Dave Biggers' comprehensive public safety plan.

See the Budget Impact

Explore how this policy fits into Dave's comprehensive \$1.2 billion budget plan:

How Does Dave's Budget Affect You?

See your personalized impact - zero tax increase, real benefits

☐ Household Income \$50,000

☐☐☐☐ Children in JCPS

☐ Your ZIP Code

Your Personal Impact

How we calculate: Benefits based on average family savings from wellness center access (\$800/year), youth program value (after-school + summer jobs), and your specific mini substation timeline. All benefits come from the same \$1.2B budget - zero tax increase.

Share your results with friends and family:

☐ Share My Results

Compare This Policy

See how Dave's approach differs from current administration policies:

Policy Comparison: Real Change vs. Status Quo

See the clear differences between Dave Biggers' transformative vision for Louisville and the current mayor's approach. The choice is yours.

☐ Share This Comparison ☐ Print Comparison

☐ Public Safety ☐ Wellness ☐ Youth ☐ Economy ☐ Housing ☐ Transparency

☐

Public Safety & Policing

Current Mayor

Traditional policing model

Approach

- Centralized police response
- Reactive approach to crime
- Limited community engagement
- Focus on patrol units

Timeline Ongoing

Budget Status quo funding

Impact Response times: 15-20 minutes average

Dave Biggers

Community-based mini substations

Approach

- 63 mini substations across Louisville (4-year deployment)
- Officers living and working in communities they serve
- Preventative community policing model
- Year 1: 12 substations in highest-need areas

Timeline Year 1-4 phased rollout

Budget Revenue-neutral through property tax restructuring

Impact Response times: 3-5 minutes (neighborhood-based)

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Mental Health & Wellness

Current Mayor

Limited wellness infrastructure

Approach

- Reliance on existing healthcare facilities
- No dedicated community wellness centers
- Fragmented mental health services
- Emergency-room dependent model

Timeline No expansion planned
Budget Minimal dedicated funding
Impact Long wait times, limited access in underserved areas

Dave Biggers

Regional wellness centers network

Approach

- 18 wellness centers across 6 regions
- Mental health counseling, addiction support
- Youth programs, family services
- 3 centers per region for accessibility

Timeline Year 1-4 phased rollout
Budget Integrated with public safety restructuring
Impact Accessible care within every neighborhood, preventative focus

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Youth Development

Current Mayor

Standard recreation programs

Approach

- Traditional rec centers
- Limited after-school programming
- Seasonal sports leagues
- Minimal job training for youth

Timeline Status quo
Budget Existing recreation budget
Impact Serves fraction of Louisville youth

Dave Biggers

Comprehensive youth investment

Approach

- After-school programs at all substations
- Job training and mentorship

- Arts, sports, and STEM programs
- Youth advisory councils
- Summer employment pathways

Timeline Immediate implementation with substation rollout

Budget \$1,200 value per child annually

Impact Accessible programs in every neighborhood

□

Economic Development

Current Mayor

Corporate incentives focus

Approach

- Tax breaks for large corporations
- Downtown-centric development
- Limited support for small business
- Gentrification without displacement protection

Timeline Ongoing

Budget Millions in corporate subsidies

Impact Benefits concentrated in select areas

Dave Biggers

Community wealth building

Approach

- Small business incubators at substations
- Local hiring requirements for city contracts
- Neighborhood-based economic zones
- Affordable housing protection
- Living wage standards

Timeline Immediate policy changes, 4-year infrastructure build

Budget Redirected from corporate subsidies

Impact Jobs and wealth stay in neighborhoods

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Housing & Affordability

Current Mayor

Market-driven housing

Approach

- Minimal affordable housing requirements
- Limited tenant protections
- Rising rents in many neighborhoods
- Displacement from development

Timeline No comprehensive plan

Budget Minimal housing trust fund

Impact Affordability crisis worsening

Dave Biggers

Housing as a human right

Approach

- Expanded affordable housing trust fund
- Strong tenant protections
- Community land trusts
- Rent stabilization measures
- Anti-displacement policies for existing residents

Timeline Immediate policy changes

Budget Increased trust fund through property tax reform

Impact Protects residents, prevents displacement

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Government Transparency

Current Mayor

Standard reporting

Approach

- Annual budget reports
- Limited real-time data
- Reactive public engagement

- Closed-door development deals

Timeline Status quo

Budget Minimal transparency infrastructure

Impact Limited public accountability

Dave Biggers

Radical transparency

Approach

- Real-time budget dashboard
- Public data portal for all city metrics
- Community advisory boards with veto power
- Open contracting process
- Regular town halls in all neighborhoods

Timeline Immediate implementation

Budget Low-cost digital infrastructure

Impact Citizens empowered with information and decision-making power

The Choice is Clear

Louisville deserves transformative change, not more of the same. Join us in building a city that works for everyone.

[Join the Campaign Read Full Policy Platform](#)

□ What Louisville Residents Say

□ Community Endorsements

Share This Policy

Help spread the word about Dave's vision for Louisville:

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▮ Make Your Voice Heard

Register to Vote

Register to Vote

Make your voice heard! Register to vote and participate in our democracy.



[Register to Vote](#) ✓ [Check Registration](#)

Important Deadlines

- **Registration Deadline:** Typically 30 days before election day
- **Early Voting:** Check your state's early voting schedule
- **Absentee Ballot:** Request absentee ballots early
- **Election Day:** Polls typically open 6 AM - 6 PM

Note: Deadlines vary by state. Check your local election office for specific dates.

Find Your Polling Place

Find Your Polling Location

Enter your address to find your polling place and get directions.

Your Address City State ZIP Code

Find My Polling Place

You can also call **1-866-OUR-VOTE (1-866-687-8683)** for assistance finding your polling location.

Stay Updated on This Policy

Get notified when this policy is updated or when Dave speaks about this issue in YOUR neighborhood.

* indicates a required field

Email Signup Information

Fax Number (Leave blank) Name * Email * We'll send you updates about the campaignZip Code 5-digit zip code (optional)

☐ I'm interested in volunteering! We'll send you information about volunteer opportunities

Sign Up

Have Ideas to Improve This Policy?

This is YOUR city. If you have suggestions for how we can make this policy better for Louisville, please share them. Every idea is reviewed.

Suggest an Improvement for Louisville

Have an idea for improving Louisville? Share your policy suggestion below. Your voice matters in shaping our city's future.

Policy Title *

Description *

0/2000 characters

Category Select a category... ▼

Your Name *

Your Email *

ZIP Code (Optional)

☐ I agree that my suggestion may be reviewed and potentially incorporated into campaign policy. My email will only be used to notify me about the status of my suggestion.

[Submit Suggestion](#)

NOT ME, WE.

Together, we make Louisville better for everyone.