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Defund WPD-led Petition for Police Transparency Surpasses 1,000 Signatures in One Weekend

A Defund WPD [petition calling for greater transparency](#) from the City of Worcester and Worcester Police Department gathered more than 1,000 signatures over the weekend. The petition, posted online on Friday, July 24, calls for the following:

- The City of Worcester stop violating open records laws and immediately release the Worcester Police Department's Bureau of Professional Standard's database of citizen complaint histories, excessive force reviews, and disciplinary records of police officers.
- This information be made public via a searchable database available on the city's website.
- The City Council ask the City Manager to cease using taxpayer money fighting the Worcester Telegram & Gazette in court over their public record request for this information.

Worcester residents deserve to know if the city employs police officers with lengthy disciplinary histories, criminal convictions, patterns of racist policing, and online extremist comments. We believe Black and Brown lives are less safe in Worcester because our city continues to hide these records. Ending systemic racism in law enforcement begins by increasing transparency. Transparency creates accountability and accountability leads to structural change.

The petition was created and released as the Worcester Telegram & Gazette fights the City of Worcester in court over records relating to the disciplinary histories of 17 WPD officers, while Patch Worcester reports that the WPD's Bureau of Professional Standards has 36 open misconduct investigations, including an incident from last week where a WPD officer responding to a mental health call struck a restrained man on a stretcher. The department did not provide Patch with any information regarding the officer.

Worcester has a long history of shrouding on-duty and off-duty police misconduct in secrecy, violating open records laws and the public trust. Many of these crimes lead to lawsuits that add up to millions of dollars, taking money away from underfunded city departments, services and programs.

Government databases compiling misconduct are not new or radical. Since 1996, the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine has provided a searchable online database of "Physician Profiles" where Massachusetts residents can see "board discipline, criminal convictions, hospital discipline and medical malpractice payments."

The petition has gathered 1,069 signatures at the time of this press release. 611 of those signatures have come from Worcester, while another 264 are from other communities in Massachusetts. The petition remains online where it continues to gather signatures. It will be submitted to the City under the Massachusetts Public Records Law.

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