

Brett P. Smiley  
Mayor

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Chief of Police



**Department of Public Safety, Police Department**  
*"Building Pride in Providence"*

November 4, 2025

Ferenc Karoly  
Executive Director  
Providence External Review Authority  
400 Westminster Street, Suite 201  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Providence Police Department Response to PERA Recommendations Regarding Alverson Street incident of July 13, 2025

Dear Executive Director Karoly:

The Providence Police Department (hereinafter, "the department") respectfully submits this response to the findings and recommendations issued by the Providence External Review Authority (PERA) on August 21, 2025 regarding the Alverson Street incident occurring on July 13, 2025. The Department has thoroughly reviewed the recommendations and underlying conclusions, and offers the following response grounded in the principles of public safety, peacekeeping, de-escalation, and lawful policing.

As you are aware, under the Providence Code of Ordinances §18 ½ - 2, when receiving recommendations of discipline from PERA, the Chief of Police "shall [...] provide the authority, the city council, and the mayor with a written explanation of the reason(s) for his/her disciplinary decision."

**1. Officers' Actions and Compliance with Law and Policy**

The Department maintains that the responding officers acted in good faith and within the scope of their lawful authority and departmental policy. Their actions were guided by the duty of peace officers to preserve order and public safety, prevent escalation, and protect life and property.

At no point did the officers participate in, facilitate, or assist federal immigration enforcement. Their limited engagement with federal agents was solely for the purpose of maintaining public safety, assessing potential threats, and preventing civil disorder at a scene that had already become volatile.

In accordance with Providence Police General Order 510.01 (Immigration Policies and Procedures) and Providence Code of Ordinances §18½-4, the Department recognizes that officers are prohibited from rendering services that directly or indirectly assist in civil immigration enforcement. However, those same

provisions do not prohibit officers from acting independently to address public safety concerns, nor do they bar the exchange of basic situational information necessary to prevent violence or ensure safety for all parties present.

The officers' mindset and intent that day were aligned with the core mission of the Providence Police Department:

- To keep the peace and avoid escalation;
- To prevent unnecessary arrests or use of force;
- To ensure the safety of all involved residents, bystanders, and officers alike.

Therefore, based on the Department's review, no violation of Providence Police General Order 510.01 or Providence Code of Ordinances §18½-4 occurred. The officers' actions were not acts of "cooperation" with ICE in the context of civil immigration enforcement, but rather acts to ensure order and prudent peacekeeping to safeguard the community.

## 2. Information Exchange and Decision-Making

Police officers routinely exchange information with other law enforcement entities when assessing risk or responding to unfolding events. Such communication is fundamental to sound police work.

The limited exchange of information between Providence officers and ICE agents was not a form of assistance, but rather a public safety necessity, ensuring officers understood the nature of the incident, potential threats, and the safety implications for nearby residents.

Officers must be empowered to make informed, split-second decisions—particularly in situations involving conflicting information, heightened emotions, and potential threats to public safety. In this instance, the decision to remain on scene and monitor the situation was guided by sound judgment and a clear responsibility to prevent violence or unrest, not to assist in any immigration enforcement activity.

Officers responded promptly and took deliberate, measured actions to maintain order and ensure the safety of all individuals present. They established a safety perimeter to prevent potential physical confrontation between federal immigration agents and members of the community.

During the incident, an officer contacted a resident after knocking on her door. The citizen expressed concern for her safety and that of her family. Recognizing that the situation was becoming increasingly volatile with federal agents displaying firearms and requesting a federal entry SWAT team officers acted swiftly, prioritizing public safety by intending to help the resident and her family safely exit the home and move away from potential danger.

The Department acknowledges that encounters involving federal immigration authorities can create significant anxiety and fear, especially within immigrant communities. Our officers remained on scene solely to safeguard all individuals—regardless of immigration status in accordance with department policy and established response protocols.

Their presence and actions should not be misconstrued as cooperation with immigration enforcement. The sole purpose of the officers' response was the outcome: to protect life, preserve peace, and ensure that no member of the public was placed in danger.

### 3. De-escalation and Peacekeeping

The Department emphasizes that de-escalation is central to the professional identity of a peace officer. In this instance, responding officers successfully avoided confrontation, unnecessary arrests, and potential civil unrest during a tense and emotionally charged event.

This conduct exemplifies the Department's expectation that officers balance assertive safety measures with restraint, composure, and respect for constitutional rights.

### 4. Clarifying "Public Safety" vs. "Cooperation"

The Department reiterates that actions taken in the interest of public safety do not equate to cooperation with civil immigration enforcement.

Officers responded to an evolving public safety concern, a large and agitated crowd, potential traffic hazards, and uncertainty surrounding the presence of federal agents. Their focus was on ensuring order, not enforcing immigration law. Their actions that day were demonstrative of this goal.

It is critical that this distinction remain clear: Providence Police will continue to prioritize safety, de-escalation, and neutrality, consistent with our obligations under City ordinance and state law.

### 5. Policy Reinforcement and Training Measures

To strengthen understanding and prevent future misinterpretations, the Department has:

- Reissued Providence Police General Order 510.01 and circulated an accompanying Training Bulletin to all sworn personnel clarifying expectations when encountering ICE or other federal agencies engaged in civil immigration operations;
- Conducted roll-call briefings and supervisory reviews to reinforce compliance with city ordinance and departmental policy;
- Disciplined several officers for Body-Worn Camera (BWC) policy violations under Providence Police General Order 320.02, and provided remedial training to reinforce proper recording practices and accountability;

These actions demonstrate the Department's proactive commitment to accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement even while maintaining that the officers' core actions on scene were consistent with policy and law.

## 6. Commitment to Ongoing Transparency and Accountability

The Department recognizes the importance of community oversight and values PERA's role in promoting accountability. Although the Department respectfully disagrees with certain findings of violations, it remains committed to maintaining a constructive dialogue and to providing documentation of corrective steps already implemented, including the issuance of a training bulletin, an updated policy, and related disciplinary measures.

Our goal remains constant: to ensure Providence officers are confident, well-trained, and able to protect all residents without fear, bias, or confusion over their lawful responsibilities.

### Conclusion:

The Providence Police Department stands by its officers and the principle that public safety is not political, but foundational. Officers that day acted in accordance with their oath to protect life, maintain peace, and uphold the law.

Their response on Alverson Street reflected the true spirit of "Semper Vigilance" remaining calm, professional, and committed to peace, even amid tension and uncertainty. The Department will continue to enhance training, improve policy clarity, and ensure that every officer understands both the limits and obligations of their authority, all in the continued interest of public safety and community trust.



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Colonel Oscar Perez  
Chief of Police

CC: Mayor Brett Smiley  
City Council President Rachel Miller  
PERA Executive Director Ferenc Karoly