Brett P. Smiley
Mayor

Colonel Oscar L. Perez
Chief of Police

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

September 9, 2025

Ferenc Karoly, Esq.
Executive Director
Providence External Review Authority
400 Westminster Street, Suites 201-202
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Director Karoly:

The Providence Police Department (PPD) is in receipt of your letter dated November 1, 2023 regarding the Providence External Review Authority's (PERA) proposed policy changes. Please find our responses to your recommendations outlined in the same order as is outlined in your letter.

General Order 370.01 Juvenile Operations

PERA first recommends that in the definitions section beginning on page two, under the definition of non-offender that PPD remove the word "unmarried" from this section (bullets #1-5). The PPD is in agreement, and the word "unmarried" will be removed from this section.

PERA additionally recommends that under section I. C. 12. PERA be added as a recipient to receive an annual written report which analyzes all juvenile enforcement activity and prevention programs (in addition to the Commanding Officer of the Investigative Division and the Chief of Police). This information is part of the PPD's annual end-of-year reports which are publicly available. These will be forwarded to PERA going forward.

PERA seeks section III. F. 3. be amended to require any child that apparently has been abused to be checked by a licensed physician. There is no requirement in the statute that a police department bring a juvenile to be checked by a licensed physician if it is believed the child has been abused. However, there are multiple assurances in the law to protect potentially abused children. There is a requirement that police notify DCYF who can then take the child into custody. Police departments are enabled to take a child into custody temporarily on a protective basis when there is suspected abuse. Additionally, all persons are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This amendment as written would take any discretion from the police and create an extra requirement not required by the law or considered necessary by the state legislature. Additionally, it is contemplated that requiring police departments to bring all children to a doctor could create a risk of health care confidentiality violations, as well as practical concerns surrounding who has authority to sign off on treatment of the juvenile if such treatment is needed, and who will pay for the medical services, etc.

Finally, PERA suggests that Section III. H. be amended to require a parent/guardian be notified at the time a minor is taken into custody. Current policy requires parents/guardians be notified as soon as possible when a juvenile is taken into custody. There is no requirement in the law that states a parent/guardian must be notified at the time a juvenile is taken into custody. Furthermore, requiring such notice could complicate any efforts of bringing a juvenile into custody insofar as parents and/or guardians could appear on scene and create a volatile situation for officers and the public. Additionally, the policy already provides that no questions can be asked of a juvenile until there is a parent, guardian, or legal counsel present. See G.O. 370.01, Juvenile Operations, pgs. 11-12.

General Order 390.01 Detainee Processing and Detention

PERA is seeking to amend section XII. A. to state that "parents or guardians must be notified at the time a juvenile is taken into custody." As stated above, this is already addressed in current policy.

General Order 330.17 Mentally Ill Persons

PERA recommends that language is added to the policy about "trauma-informed care to avoid re-traumatization." It is unclear what specifically PERA is looking to amend and how. Please provide further details as to this recommendation.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Colonel Oscar Perez
Chief of Police