

Hello,

I'm a longtime Portland resident writing to demand full, unfettered public access to police disciplinary and arbitration records. Police unions protect their own at all costs; as long as they have the power to shield bad actors from the consequences of their actions, meaningful reform remains impossible.

(To be clear, I'm *not* a reformist. A just and compassionate society has no use for police, and I believe they must be systematically defunded and, eventually, abolished. But reform is more politically palatable, which is why I feel compelled to speak up about misconduct records and their role in reform.)

If we, as a society, are serious about enacting meaningful police reform—and I have my doubts about that, but I digress—we *must* start by making these records public. Truly, completely, 100% public. We need a free, easily searchable, publicly maintained database that is completely insulated from police union influence. It must contain *everything*, from names and badge numbers to disciplinary hearing minutes to misconduct records to raw bodycam footage. Everything.

In practice, this will be tricky: How will the records be collected and published? What happens when, not if, the cops refuse to comply? I don't pretend to know all the answers, but I've got one: **Any oversight committee with even a single police-appointed (or police-approved) member cannot be trusted to handle misconduct data.** No matter what police oversight ends up looking like, this will remain true. You simply can't put cops or cop proxies on a cop oversight board and expect anything to change.

Police and the unions that protect them have never wielded more power and influence—and, unlike the people they routinely brutalize and murder in the streets, they are never forced to answer for their crimes. Giving citizens complete, unlimited access to police misconduct data tips the balance of power back where it belongs: Towards the people. It won't fix everything overnight, but it's a start.

Alice Newton

SE Portland resident, 2007-2017 and Jan 2020-present