



**Date: 6/25/2020**

**RE: Comments in support of SB 1604**

Central City Concern (CCC) is a non-profit direct service organization that provides integrated primary and behavioral health care, supportive and affordable housing, and employment services to people impacted by homelessness in the Tri-County area. Central City Concern operates about 2,100 units of affordable housing, serves 9,000 patients annually through our 13 Federally Qualified Health Centers, makes 1,200 job placements annually. **Our programs and properties span Districts 33,36,42,43,44,45,46,47,48 and 50**

“As an employee who has had family members need mental health services and who have lost lives to police gun violence, I cannot express enough the need for better funding for behavioral and mental health services. There is also a large need for police reform, in particular, how they respond to a behavioral or mental health crisis.” *Renee Castilla, Executive Assistant, Old Town Recovery Center*

Far too much trust has been lost between police and community, the lack of transparent and clear accountability is a factor in this breakdown. Local communities need to have the space and freedom to restructure their public safety systems to prioritize community need and not armed enforcement of laws that are rooted in systematic racism. If police cannot be held accountable, even when their own chain of command determines there has been wrong doing (which in and of itself is a hurdle and often fails to hold officers accountable), no amount of training or relationship building will repair the damage that has been done. Arbitration should not be used to shield officers from accountability and any disciplinary matrix should not be subject to collective bargaining negotiations.

Thank you,

Mercedes Elizalde  
Public Policy Director  
Central City Concern