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Contact: Diane.Shinn@dc.gov, 202-727-8991

Police Department Policy & Practice Screen and Discipline Bias and Discrimination

Comprehensive audit finds no evidence of hate group ties in department

March 18, 2025 (WASHINGTON) In December 2022 the Council of the District of Columbia directed the Office of the D.C. Auditor (ODCA) to assess whether Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) officers had ties to white supremacist or other hate groups that “may affect the officers’ ability to carry out their duties...or may undermine public trust.” A detailed and comprehensive assessment published today did not identify any significant ties or affiliations with hate groups that would impact officers performing their duties.

A review of complaints over a five-year period in MPD’s extensive complaint tracking system identified two incidents in which sworn members associated with the Proud Boys, both of which were already publicly known. ODCA identified just 24 incidents over five years that in ODCA’s view constituted bias or discrimination, most reported internally, and most involving use of racially charged language. In all cases MPD disciplined the individuals involved or provided ODCA with valid reasons for not imposing discipline such as an officer’s separation from the agency.

“MPD’s hiring practices carefully screen against actions or viewpoints espoused by publicly recognized hate groups, and the department’s complaint tracking provides ample opportunity for residents and fellow officers to call out any inappropriate behavior,” D.C. Auditor Kathy Patterson said in releasing “a largely positive report on a difficult subject.”

The audit team also surveyed the MPD staff on their experiences and MPD policies. Some 4% of respondents said they had witnessed behavior they associated with hate groups but ODCA’s review of five years of complaints did not document evidence of such associations.

The report made recommendations to strengthen the department’s current screening and training policies and procedures, and in written comments MPD Chief Pamela Smith concurred six of the report’s 10 recommendations.

“MPD has strong policies, training, and accountability systems in place to ensure that our members exercise their authority in a fair, impartial, and constitutional manner,” Smith

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wrote in MPD's response to the audit. "We also work hard to ensure our workplace is an inclusive one; however, an inclusive workplace does not mean we will tolerate activities related to extremism, hate, or discrimination among our members."

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