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**GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIRMAN TALIAFERRO, VICE-CHAIRMAN OSTERMAN, AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE:**

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. I am honored to have been nominated to serve as the City's Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety, and I am acutely conscious of coming before you at a time when issues of public safety reform and police accountability have perhaps never loomed larger.

The events of the last several days, in Chicago and across the country, have been the most desperate kind of call to action. The urgency of the moment calls for deep commitment and strong leadership in pursuit of effective, accountable, and constitutional policing. In the midst of so much upheaval, we are simply and profoundly obligated to act—to understand the events of recent days as a catalyst for reform, not an obstacle to it.

I believe my professional background prepares me well to navigate rough waters in guiding independent oversight of the City's police department and police accountability agencies. My experiences as a prosecutor working closely with police officers and as an attorney and chief investigator in civilian oversight have provided me with a perspective on the deepest problems and highest virtues in policing, and rendered me profoundly committed to public safety reform. There is a difficult and urgent—never more urgent than now—cultural conversation to be had between the police and those who seek to hold them accountable; I know, work closely with, and deeply respect people on both sides of that conversation, and I would like to help lead it from middle ground—the ground on which meaningful reform must and will be built. As Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety, I will bring literacy in law enforcement, police reform, and community engagement; deep and detailed knowledge of CPD and Chicago's accountability agencies; a strong professional network; and hard-earned outward-facing and institutional credibility. Coming from within OIG and the Public Safety section, I am well-positioned to maintain our forward momentum, capitalize on our progress, and move swiftly to address our challenges. The work of the section is no longer in its infancy—we have accomplished much and grown tremendously. Having worked not only in the Public Safety section but also in and with other components of OIG uniquely situates me to understand internal dynamics and relationships, strengthen connective tissue between OIG's

sections, and use internal synergies to increase the impact and effectiveness of our work.

I come to civilian oversight by way of criminal prosecution, community engagement, and administrative investigations. My interest in the law, and specifically in working on behalf of victims of crime, was driven by my involvement, while in college, with domestic violence service agencies. That led me to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, where I spent three years as a law clerk and six as an attorney. In that work, I had an up-close view of CPD records, practices, policies, and members. I learned a great deal about the way the Department works—and doesn't work. While assigned to the State's Attorney's Office's Community Justice Center, I worked closely with neighborhood and advocacy groups, as the work of community-based prosecution requires. When I left the State's Attorney's Office to join OIG, I began in our Legal section, teaming with the Investigations section to plan and execute disciplinary investigations of City employees. Moving into the Public Safety section as Chief Investigator and then as Associate General Counsel, I oversaw the development of the Inspections Unit, devoted specifically to the oversight of police disciplinary investigations, and supervised evaluations and reviews of CPD's policies, practices, and procedures. These experiences leave me well-informed and well-prepared to fill this role.

I bring to this position a strong network of institutional actors and community stakeholders. I have managed my professional relationships with the understanding that the most pressing issues in criminal justice and policing in Chicago require solutions that will necessarily cut across agencies and entities. Believing deeply in the power of government to do good, and in the interest of amplifying impact by collaborating across units of government, I have built and maintained strong relationships with entities operating in both the municipal policymaking and law enforcement spheres. I also see tremendous opportunities to work closely with community-based and nonprofit organizations. Meaningful reforms to the relationships between the police and the communities and populations they serve will not be the products of conversations limited to police officers and bureaucrats; rather, they will be achieved through collaboration with advocates and service providers who are experts in their fields.

In the oversight enterprise of providing recommendations, credibility is the most valuable currency. In the course of my work to build personal and institutional credibility, I have learned that the critical tools in doing so are literacy in the field and local knowledge. My background as a former prosecutor and OIG attorney equips me with literacy in law enforcement, issues around constitutional policing, investigations, and accountability. I have been well-served by speaking the language of policing in a way which is underpinned by, but not limited to, an academic foundation. I also carry

with me powerful lessons in the importance of local knowledge learned during my time working in community-based prosecution in Chicago. Where literacy in law enforcement and policing allows me to speak a language, knowing Chicago by the block and the Chicago Police Department by the unit has taught me a dialect. I have deep, experience-based knowledge of CPD, its members, and its work. In specific action, this looks like ride-alongs and beat meetings, frequent appearances at police stations and in courtrooms, and evenings spent at community meetings. Effective working relationships with the Department, the accountability agencies, and the community are necessary mechanisms to channel credibility into meaningful results. With respect to the Department, COPA, and the Police Board, I have made conscious efforts to take a balanced approach which recognizes their nature as both subjects of and partners in the work of the Public Safety section. The pursuit of productive reform prohibits scorched earth antagonism and the critical necessity of independence forbids too much coziness. It is incumbent upon OIG to occupy this carefully calibrated position, and to use it to speak to the community with a deeply informed, reliably objective voice.

Establishing and maintaining community trust is a bedrock necessity for the effective operation of the Public Safety section. To this end, the Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety must both receive the wisdom of those with lived experience in order to identify priorities and focus areas, and provide members of the community with information which is practically and immediately useful. I am deeply committed to doing so.

I started today by describing recent events as a call to action in this work, and I know it to be true that to shrink from that call would be the failure of a generation. I believe fiercely in the work of OIG's Public Safety section and have worked hard to contribute to its successes. I am deeply, urgently motivated to do all I can to ensure that the section helps drive meaningful, transformational reform at this critical time for Chicago. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to do so in this role.

Respectfully,  
Deborah Witzburg