



CITY OF CHICAGO
OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

20
25

Recommendation to Reopen Chicago Police Department Disciplinary Investigation

CPD Log #2024-0003351

OIG Case #C2025-000000244

Published October 17, 2025

October 17, 2025

Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC) § 2-56-230(c)(ii), the Public Safety section of the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) conducts reviews of individual closed disciplinary investigations conducted by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) and the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA). Based on those reviews, OIG may make a recommendation to reopen the investigation to address a deficiency materially affecting its outcome.¹

COPA investigated allegations that CPD member, Officer Joseph Cappello IV, Star #10626, violated Department policy by displaying a Proud Boys tattoo on their chest, and wore an unauthorized patch of a "right wing gun club" on their uniform. COPA administratively closed its investigation into the allegation that Officer Cappello had a Proud Boys tattoo and referred the allegation that Officer Cappello IV wore an unauthorized patch on their uniform to BIA for its review. BIA sustained the allegation that Officer Cappello IV violated Department policy by wearing the unauthorized patch and recommended a one-day suspension.

During its review, OIG identified that the allegation related to the Proud Boys had not been investigated, and neither of the allegations against Officer Cappello IV fell under COPA's jurisdiction. When there is no allegation of biased-based verbal abuse alleged or identified, BIA typically investigates allegations of CPD members being affiliated with extremist groups (i.e. Proud Boys). Therefore, it was unclear why COPA administratively closed an investigation into an allegation that did not fall under its jurisdiction.

OIG recommended that COPA reopen the investigation to reinstate the allegation that Officer Cappello IV displayed a Proud Boys tattoo on their chest and assign the allegation to BIA for investigation.

In response to OIG's recommendation, COPA agreed to reopen the investigation, reinstate the allegation against Officer Cappello IV, and assign it to BIA for investigation.

BIA did not inquire into the tattoo image and reached a finding of Unfounded for the allegation that Officer Cappello IV displayed a Proud Boys tattoo on their chest. In its Supplemental Closing Report, BIA states that it concurred with COPA's preliminary investigative findings based on the photo evidence that only showed a small section of the tattoo and the lack of cooperation from the complainant. However, BIA acknowledged that it, "did not provide a formal explanation in the Closing Report in support of COPA's administrative closure." BIA changed the finding from administratively closed to unfounded.

OIG's letter to COPA containing its recommendations is attached in Appendix A. COPA's response is attached as Appendix B.

¹ Once BIA or COPA has responded to an OIG recommendation to reopen an investigation, and once the underlying investigation has reached a final disciplinary decision, OIG's recommendation letters and the agencies' responses will be published on OIG's website. In these procedural postures, OIG's recommendations to reopen and the agencies' responses have been available and, from time to time, released pursuant to MCC § 2-56-250 and the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. These recommendations to reopen, issued pursuant to MCC § 2-56-230(c), are separate from OIG's own confidential investigative work, which is governed by the confidentiality provisions set out in MCC § 2-56-110.

Appendix A | OIG Letter



Deborah Witzburg | Inspector General
City of Chicago
Office of Inspector General
231 South LaSalle Street, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (773) 478-7799

Via Electronic Mail

July 8, 2025

LAKENYA WHITE
INTERIM CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR
CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY
1615 WEST CHICAGO AVENUE, 4TH FLOOR
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60622

TIMOTHY L. MOORE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
BUREAU OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT
3510 SOUTH MICHIGAN AVENUE
CHICAGO, IL 60653

Re: Log #2024-0003351

Dear Chief Administrator White and Deputy Director Moore:

Pursuant to § 2-56-230(c)(ii) of the Municipal Code of Chicago (MCC), the Office of Inspector General's (OIG) Public Safety section has conducted a preliminary review of the bifurcated investigation conducted by the Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA) and the Chicago Police Department's (CPD) Bureau of Internal Affairs (BIA) in Log #2024-0003351. OIG recommends that Log #2024-0003351 be reopened for the appropriate investigative agency to investigate and consider all available evidence. Log #2024-0003351 is currently in a Command Channel Review status.

Log #2024-0003351 concerns allegations that CPD Officer Joseph Cappello IV, Star #10626, violated Department policy by displaying a Proud Boys tattoo on their chest, and wearing an unauthorized patch of a group called Pizza Boiis, described by the original complainant as a "right wing gun club," on their uniform. COPA administratively closed its investigation into the allegation that Officer Cappello had a Proud Boys tattoo, and referred the allegation that Officer Cappello IV wore an unauthorized patch on their uniform to BIA for its review.¹ As a result, it appears that neither agency conducted an investigation into allegations related to the Proud Boys.

¹ COPA noted in Attachment 10 that Officer Cappello IV wore the unauthorized patch for 13 months.



Log #2024-0003351, Attachment 8.

BIA conducted an investigation into Officer Cappello IV's display of an unauthorized patch on their CPD uniform. BIA researched the Pizza Boi's and discovered that it is "an online retail store that offers shooting related items."² BIA found no evidence linking Pizza Boi's to an "extremist group."³ BIA notes that the design of the Pizza Boi's patch, a set of red dice (one with two dots, one with one dot), and blue rectangular shape box with the words Pizza Boi's and a thunder bolt, may be a reference to the 2nd Amendment of the United States Constitution.⁴ BIA determined that while the Pizza Boi's patch may not be linked to an extremist group or biased-based organization, it was still a politically motivated expression, and therefore a violation of Department policy.

On May 6, 2025, BIA served Officer Cappello IV with an electronic Notification of Charges/Allegations form that included both the allegation of wearing an unauthorized patch on their uniform and violating Department policy by displaying a Proud Boys tattoo on their chest. In BIA's audio recorded interview of Officer Cappello IV, Sergeant Pedro Barrera, Star #1069, states that they accidentally served Officer Cappello IV with the allegation of displaying a Proud Boys tattoo, which COPA had administratively closed. Sergeant Barrera stated that they could not strike it, but that the BIA investigation was only concerned with the allegation of wearing an unauthorized patch. During Officer Cappello IV's interview, Officer Cappello stated that the Pizza Boi's is a company based in Oregon that does competition style shooting and eats pizza.⁵ Officer Cappello IV expanded on their answer by adding that they thought the patch was "cool" and was also an "ice

² Note: CP-0491917

³ Note: CP-0491916

⁴ BIA performed an open-source query related to the design of the patch and noted Google's Artificial Intelligence response as "the 2nd Amendment has two clauses (one dot) 'well regulated militia' and the (two dots) equal- (right to keep and bear arms). Note: CP-0491920.

⁵ Attachment 23.

breaker.”⁶ BIA concluded that Officer Cappello IV’s placement of the Pizza Boii’s patch on their uniform was a violation of the Department’s Rules and Regulations and Uniform and Property U04-01 “Uniform and Appearance Standards” directive in violation of CPD Rules 2, 3, and 6. BIA sustained the allegation for wearing the Pizza Boiis patch on their uniform and recommended Officer Cappello IV receive a one-day suspension.

Based on OIG’s preliminary review of the COPA Web Complaint included in the investigative file, the allegations submitted by the complainant fall under BIA’s jurisdiction.⁷ The complaint reads:

“I have photographs from April 9, 2024, [sic] taken after a press conference for Dexter Reed outside the 11th district that show OFFICER JOSEPH CAPPELLO IV (BADGE 10626) with what appears to be a large Proud Boys tattoo on [their] chest. The officer is also violating department policy by wearing a patch for the Pizza Bois, which is a right wing gun club in Oregon. Given CAPPELLO’S previous sustained complaints and the fact he is on the Brady list, the patch and alleged tattoo are huge red flags.”⁸

Historically, BIA has investigated allegations against CPD members affiliation with extremist groups when an allegation of biased-based verbal abuse is neither alleged nor identified. In Log #2024-0003351, there are no allegations that fall squarely into COPA’s jurisdiction. It is, therefore, unclear why COPA administratively closed the allegation that Officer Cappello IV has a Proud Boy tattoo, potentially in violation of CPD Directive General Order G08-03, Prohibitions on Criminal and Biased Organizations, rather than assign the allegation to BIA for investigation alongside the allegation related to the Pizza Boiis patch.⁹

Based on OIG’s preliminary review, and without taking any position on any other aspect of the investigation or its findings, OIG recommends that COPA reinstate the allegation that Officer Cappello IV violated CPD policy by displaying a Proud Boys tattoo on their chest and assign the allegation to BIA for investigation.

Please contact Chief Investigative Analyst LaDonna Candia-Flanagan at lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org or (773) 478-5614 with any questions. Please send your response to this recommendation within the time allowed by MCC § 2-56-245. OIG will consider a failure to respond in the time permitted by ordinance to be a declination of our recommendation. OIG looks forward to COPA’s response, and recommends that COPA incorporate this letter and its response into the electronic case file to provide for a complete record.

Respectfully,



Tobara Richardson
Deputy Inspector General for Public Safety
Office of Inspector General

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Attachment 4.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Municipal Code of Chicago 2-78-120(g).

cc: Deborah Witzburg, Inspector General, OIG
Samuel Chae, Associate General Counsel for Public Safety, OIG
LaDonna Candia-Flanagan, Chief Investigative Analyst for Public Safety, OIG
Angela Snell, Assistant General Counsel, COPA
Deputy Chief Traci Walker, BIA, CPD
Scott Spears, General Counsel, CPD
Sergeant Connie Flores, BIA, CPD
Officer Jessica R. Medina, Legal Affairs, CPD

Appendix B | Department Response



RE: Recommendation to Reopen Log #2024-0003351 (In CCR)

From Angela Snell <Angela.Snell@chicagocopa.org>

Date Thu 7/17/2025 7:58 AM

To LaDonna Candia Flanagan <lcandia_flanagan@igchicago.org>; Lakenya White <LAKENYA.WHITE@chicagocopa.org>; Timothy Moore <Timothy.Moore@chicagopolice.org>; Spears, Scott <Scott.Spears@chicagopolice.org>

Cc Traci Walker <Traci.Walker@chicagopolice.org>; Flores, Connie D. <Connie.Flores@chicagopolice.org>; Medina, Jessica <Jessica.Medina@chicagopolice.org>; Deborah Witzburg <dwitzburg@igchicago.org>; Tobará Richardson <trichardson@igchicago.org>; Samuel Chae <schae@igchicago.org>

WARNING - This message is from outside the Office of Inspector General email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources. Please report suspicious messages using the "Report Phish" button on the Outlook ribbon.

Good morning, COPA agrees to reopen this log to reinstate the allegation that Officer Cappello IV violated CPD policy by displaying a Proud Boys tattoo on their chest and will assign the allegation to BIA for investigation. Please let me know of any questions.

Best,

Angie Snell (they/she)
Acting General Counsel
Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)
1615 W. Chicago Ave.
Chicago, IL 60622
Office: 312-746-0186
Cell: 312-965-2025

From: LaDonna Candia-Flanagan <lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org>

Sent: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 3:27 PM

To: Lakenya White <LAKENYA.WHITE@chicagocopa.org>; Timothy Moore <Timothy.Moore@chicagopolice.org>; Spears, Scott <Scott.Spears@chicagopolice.org>; Angela Snell <Angela.Snell@chicagocopa.org>

Cc: Traci Walker <Traci.Walker@chicagopolice.org>; Flores, Connie D. <Connie.Flores@chicagopolice.org>; Medina, Jessica <Jessica.Medina@chicagopolice.org>; Deborah Witzburg <dWitzburg@igchicago.org>; Tobará Richardson <trichardson@igchicago.org>; Samuel Chae <schae@igchicago.org>

Subject: Re: Recommendation to Reopen Log #2024-0003351 (In CCR)

[Warning: External email]

My apologies—I inadvertently left off [@Spears, Scott](#) and [@Angela Snell](#).

LaDonna Candia-Flanagan
Chief Investigative Analyst-Public Safety
City of Chicago | Office of Inspector General

231 S. LaSalle, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org
(773) 478-5614

(833) Talk-2-IG | (833) 825-5244
talk2ig@igchicago.org | igchicago.org

From: LaDonna Candia-Flanagan
Sent: Tuesday, July 8, 2025 3:06 PM
To: Lakenya White <lakenya.white@chicagocopa.org>; Moore, Timothy L. <timothy.moore@chicagopolice.org>
Cc: Traci Walker <traci.walker@chicagopolice.org>; Flores, Connie D. <connie.flores@chicagopolice.org>; Medina, Jessica <jessica.medina@chicagopolice.org>; Deborah Witzburg <dwitzburg@igchicago.org>; Tobar Richardson <trichardson@igchicago.org>; Samuel Chae <schae@igchicago.org>
Subject: Recommendation to Reopen Log #2024-0003351 (In CCR)

Dear Chief Administrator White and Deputy Director Moore:

On behalf of Deputy Inspector General Tobar Richardson, please find attached to this email a recommendation to reopen Log #2024 0003351. Log #2024 0003351 is currently in command channel review. Please acknowledge your receipt of this correspondence and let me know if you have any questions.

LaDonna Candia-Flanagan
Chief Investigative Analyst-Public Safety
City of Chicago | Office of Inspector General
231 S. LaSalle, 12th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604
lcandia-flanagan@igchicago.org
(773) 478-5614

(833) Talk-2-IG | (833) 825-5244
talk2ig@igchicago.org | igchicago.org



LaDonna Candia-Flanagan

Chief Investigative Analyst for Public Safety

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General is an independent, nonpartisan oversight agency whose mission is to promote economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and integrity in the administration of programs and operations of City government.

OIG's authority to produce reports of its findings and recommendations is established in the City of Chicago Municipal Code §§ 2-56-030(d), -035(c), -110, -230, and -240.

For further information about this report, please contact the City of Chicago Office of Inspector General, 231 S. LaSalle, 12th Floor, Chicago, IL 60604, or visit our website at igchicago.org.

Talk to Us

(833) TALK-2-IG/(833) 825-5244

talk2ig@igchicago.org

igchicago.org/talk2ig

OIG Business Office

(773) 478-7799

Cover photo courtesy of the Department of Assets, Information and Services.
Alternate formats available upon request.

