

Statement on Cadet Class Vote

We the undersigned members of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force (RPSTF) believe that by voting to prematurely restart the scandal-plagued Austin Police Training Academy, particularly against the direct recommendation of the RPSTF and in advance of the release of our official report, the Austin City Council has:

- Put community members vulnerable to police violence in peril by allowing a training academy with a well-documented history of racism, sexism, violence and humiliation to teach and certify new individuals to patrol the streets of Austin prior to the implementation of recommendations in multiple city-sponsored reports and without assurance by community members to the community as a whole that the curriculum has actually been transformed in accordance with the many related Council directives;
- Demonstrated their disdain for the RPSTF and their lack of commitment to the concept of reimagining public safety;
- Proved that the RPSTF, like so many task forces before, was designed to give the appearance that the city was working toward a goal it had no intention of achieving; and
- Wasted the time and energy of many committed community members, advocates and city staff.

In response, we demand that the Austin City Council:

- Publicly re-commit to the Reimagining Public Safety process;
- Create and adhere to a binding process to ensure the recommendations of the RPSTF are a meaningful part of city decision-making;
- Ensure equal weight is given to RPSTF Recommendations as to the input provided by other stakeholders and city staff;
- Hold a special public City Council meeting after the City Manager brings forth a proposed budget and before city council meets to discuss said budget to review and discuss the RPSTF recommendations with public testimony;
- Audit the RPSTF process so far and ensure participants can offer reflections on the process and how it should be organized; and
- Commit to an ongoing community process to reimagine public safety beyond this year's budget process that includes compensation for the labor of regularly involved community members as well as individuals harmed by public safety practices and willing to give input regarding their lived experience.

Signed,

Alicia Torres, ICE Fuera de Austin
Amanda Lewis, Survivor Justice Project
Cate Graziani, Texas Harm Reduction Alliance
Chas Moore, Austin Justice Coalition
Chris Harris, RPSTF Member
David Johnson, Grassroots Leadership
Hailey Easley, Austin Asian Community Health Initiative

Jessica Johnson, Texas Fair Defense Project
Kathy Mitchell, Just Liberty
Matthew Simpson, ACLU of Texas
Priscilla Hale, allgo
Sue Gabriel, Paula X. Rojas, and Rodney Sáenz, Communities of Color United: Coalition for Racial Justice (CCU)