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## **New Report by the Minnesota Justice Research Center Identifies the POST Board as a Powerful Tool for Enhancing Police Accountability in Minnesota**

[Minneapolis, MN]. The [Minnesota Justice Research Center \(MNJRC\)](#) today released a major report on the topic of police accountability in Minnesota. The report finds that while the current systems that hold police officers accountable for their actions are ineffective, the little-known POST Board holds strong potential for strengthening systems of accountability across the state.

The MNJRC calls upon residents, community leaders, policymakers, law enforcement, and other stakeholders to support recent efforts by the [Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training \(POST\) Board](#) to reform and strengthen systems of police accountability in Minnesota.

“It has been two years since the murder of George Floyd and the uprising that followed is arguably still happening,” said Justin Terrell, Executive Director of the MNJRC “Our interest in the topic of this report is to equip people with rigorous and balanced research to be used as a tool for meaningful change. We offer this report in that spirit and to anyone who cares about building a more just criminal legal system, a system that is fair, equitable, holds people accountable and produces restorative outcomes.”

Terrell, who also serves on the POST Board and as the Chair of its Rules Committee, sees the POST Board as a space where advocates, educators, law enforcement professionals and community members from across the state have worked together under the leadership of Chair Kelly McCarthy to overhaul the rules that govern the license of officers. “With this report, we have a chance to educate all Minnesotans on how the POST Board could be a powerful tool to enhance police accountability while ensuring that communities receive the services they seek from qualified and dedicated professionals who have a license and are held to a high but reasonable standard.”

### **Report Findings**

The report, “Accountability in Policing: The Unexplored Power of the POST Board,” investigates the current systems that hold Minnesota police officers accountable to the communities they serve.

“The report follows a year of conversations with communities across Minnesota, where we consistently heard that true accountability must precede efforts to build trust between police officers and the communities they serve,” said Dr. Katie Remington Cunningham, MNJRC Research Director. “This is especially true for the Black and Brown communities that have so often experienced violence at the hands of police. Our report finds that Minnesota’s current systems of accountability are complex but important to understand in order to create the outcomes community members deserve. Highlighting the power of the POST Board is an important step in this process.”

The report explores how accountability systems exist primarily in the administrative rules and departmental policies that establish what appropriate conduct looks like, and the state-level bodies and departmental procedures that are activated when misconduct occurs.

While the public has access to minimal data on police misconduct, the limited data that is available suggests that **current systems of accountability are overwhelmingly ineffective**. In Minneapolis alone, there are hundreds of misconduct complaints against officers each year. Yet few investigations are conducted from these complaints and even fewer officers receive any type of discipline. Such findings are consistent with a recent report from the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, which finds evidence of racially-discriminatory policing by the Minneapolis Police Department.

## **Report Recommendations**

To strengthen systems of police accountability in Minnesota, the MNJRC recommends investment in and attention to the [Minnesota Peace Officer Standards and Training \(POST\) Board](#).

The POST Board is an executive branch state agency originally designed for the very purpose of holding officers accountable through its licensing authority. It regulates licensing and training standards for the nearly 12,000 peace officers in Minnesota, which include municipal and tribal police officers, state troopers, Department of Natural Resources law enforcement officers, special agents of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, and sheriffs.

Yet while the POST Board has the potential to be an important accountability system, it is not currently an effective one. The report makes five key recommendations for enhancing the power of the POST Board and strengthening accountability across the state, including:

- Improve data collection and dissemination related to officer misconduct;
- Improve community engagement efforts at the POST Board;
- Revise POST Board standards of conduct to include specific and general language;
- Increase staffing and funding for the POST Board; and
- Adopt [draft rules changes](#), which strengthen the POST Board's ability to hold individual police officers accountable to the communities they serve.

Amidst the often volatile landscape of policing in Minnesota, the POST Board represents an oasis of healthy dialogue and collaboration. It is led by a diverse set of governor-appointed members, which include members of the general public, law enforcement, and licensing professionals. Board members are working effectively and productively to strengthen systems of accountability across the state.

## **About the Minnesota Justice Research Center:**

*The Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC) is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to driving meaningful change to Minnesota's criminal legal system through rigorous and community-centered research, education, and policy development. <https://www.mnjrc.org/>*