



Multnomah Charter Review Committee
Subcommittee on Appointment of Sheriff
Via Email Transmission

April 20, 2016

To Whom it May Concern:

Causa strongly favors allowing the voters of Multnomah County to deliberate over making the Sheriff an appointed position by the Board of County Commissioners.

Causa is the state's foremost not-for-profit organization representing the interests of farmworkers, immigrants and their allies. Causa has a strong track record of advancing immigrant rights. Together with local partners, we've won in-state tuition and access to state based financial aid for undocumented students, statewide paid sick days for all workers, and other policies that positively affect Latino immigrant families in Oregon.

Many of the families these policies seek to support live in the unincorporated parts of Multnomah County, where there are no city police. In these cases, the Sheriff and his/her deputies are the primary law enforcement officers patrolling outside of city limits. Research shows significant racial disparities in many aspects of the criminal justice system—arrest and charging practices, bail bond, length of sentences and jail policies and conditions – that puts the individuals and families Causa serves at risk.

Knowing all this, Causa is alarmed by the recent Corrections Use of Force Audit of the Sheriff's Office revealing:

According to the audit, the MCSO does not currently have a system for identifying employees who use force at a higher rate than others. At the same time, the audit found that 15 percent of employees were responsible for 45 percent of the force reports.

Due to this use of force audit and other possible irregularities in the current Sheriff's Office, we urge the Multnomah County Charter Review Committee to place a measure on the November Ballot to establish the role of the Board of County Commissioners in appointing the Office of Sheriff.

Multnomah County is on its third Sheriff with a troubling record of professional misconduct and/or mismanagement. In fact, Sheriff Bernie Guisto once said in regard to his relationship with the County Commission, *"They're not my bosses; they're my bankers, I'm not gonna debate how I do spend my budget. That's why I'm independently elected."* It is past time to bring more accountability to this office. Even if the appointment process had a six-year sunset and then voters were asked to affirm or reject the appointment structure, it would break the cycle of lost faith in our Sheriff for the people of Multnomah County.

Sincerely,

Andrea Miller
Executive Director