

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Albuquerque Police Department



Harold J. Medina, Chief of Police

May 13, 2024

Dear Councilors,

As you consider the proposed changes to our City Charter that will drastically impact our public safety departments, we believe it is important that you hear directly from current leadership.

Simply put, these proposed changes would disrupt and set back our public safety agencies in Albuquerque at the worst possible time.

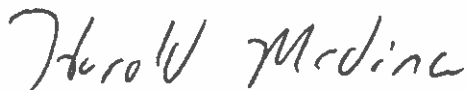
The Albuquerque Police Department is about to reach full and effective compliance with the terms of the Court-Approved Settlement Agreement. Following more than 9 years of reform and culture change, this proposal would remove accountability at APD and open the door for political influence into virtually all decisions. If these changes are implemented, officers at every rank could be tempted to leverage individual City Council members for promotions, or worse, to avoid discipline.

400 Roma NW
Albuquerque
The same would be true for Albuquerque Fire Rescue, where the command structure would be significantly undermined under the proposed system. We want our firefighters and emergency responders to do their jobs with the belief that their work will be recognized fairly, and opportunities to promote are based on their experience and achievement – not political favoritism or patronage.

New Mexico 87102
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Amending the City Charter in this way would also limit the pool of future candidates to become chiefs of AFR and APD. Our departments rely on top professionals from New Mexico and around the nation, and these changes will severely impact the ability for our City to recruit top talent. Who would want to take these jobs, already some of the toughest in city government, if they had no clear accountability?

Perhaps most important for the residents of Albuquerque is the public trust we work hard to build at every level of our departments. We all engage with neighborhood, community and business leaders on a daily basis to address their needs when it comes to public safety. Often times, those needs and concerns are expressed through elected leaders, including the Mayor’s Office or individual City Councilors. We work with all elected leaders on these issues. However, without clear accountability to one leader who represents the entire city, we may experience a breakdown in community engagement. If one resident in one neighborhood believes they are denied public safety services because of the political influence of another neighborhood, we will all lose critical public trust.

We respectfully ask that you consider our voices and our experience as public safety leaders as you consider the proposed changes to the City Charter. We also encourage you to reach out to past chiefs and public safety leaders to get their input on these important changes. We all want the same thing – a safe and healthy city that can count on professional police and fire departments.



Harold J. Medina, Chief of Police
Albuquerque Police Department

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Emily V. Jaramillo, Fire Chief
Albuquerque Fire Department

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