**Why Do We Need A Civilian Investigative Panel?**

In 2015, Tampa residents, community leaders, faith leaders, social justice leaders, and concerned neighbors came together to repair community and police relations in the city of Tampa.

News reports set off alarm bells over decade-long patterns of high police arrest rates. Tampanians were shocked to learn that Tampa Police Department (TPD) policies targeted black cyclists with more than 80 percent of bicycle tickets. That the TPD wrote more bike tickets than St. Petersburg, Orlando, Jacksonville and Miami police departments combined was doubly outrageous. That police were promoted based on writing volumes of tickets was intolerable. In fact TPD’s pattern of high arrest rates for African American males has driven up the rates for the whole state of Florida. Tampanians began to understand why members of communities of color have been saying that the police can’t be entrusted with the responsibility of keeping everyone in our city safe.

In response to these concerns, a coalition of the willing, now known as **Tampa for Justice**, was founded with a commitment to make the City of Tampa a municipality that respects all neighborhoods equally and fairly.

**Tampa for Justice** collected the stories of Tampanians from all walks of life and their experiences with TPD. The coalition researched policing practices in other cities and reviewed the results of the Presidential Task Force on 21st Century Policing. This information was presented and recommendations were made to City of Tampa officials that would promote:

* building trust and respect between all Tampa neighborhoods and police officers,
* ensuring transparency and accountability of the TPD, and
* creating a citizen-led board that could review and oversee Tampa policing policies.

The **Tampa for Justice** actions and proposal were initially rebuffed. But then the Mayor announced an advisory board and the City Council codified it into the Citizens Review Board (CRB). CRB’s are effective bodies that help generate healthy police policies and foster trust between communities that are policed and the police officers entrusted to protect those communities…when they are built to work for such purposes.

**Tampa for Justice** realized through extensive research, listening sessions, and interviews that CRB’s simply don’t work when they’re not built to work.

The Mayor’s recently established CRB is missing fundamental keystones that will make it work for fair and balanced policing in our city.

That’s why **Tampa for Justice** is continuing to pursue an independent Civilian Investigative Panel that is created to serve both our neighborhoods and our police department. Tampa residents deserve non-partisan and non-political police oversight. We the voters can make that happen by supporting the Civilian Investigative Panel ballot initiative.

This Civilian Investigative Panel Ballot Initiative will create a panel that is:

1. independent of the police department (the current Tampa CRB is staffed by a captain in the Tampa Police Department),
2. can collect citizens’ complaints directly (the current board cannot),
3. can put forward national best practices for policing (the current board cannot), and
4. has subpoena power (the current board does not),

In short, the Citizen Investigative Panel will have the power to serve the community.

Help move Tampa to the 21st century. Let’s create healthy, happy communities that trust one another and work alongside each other.

**Sign the petition for an independent, Civilian Investigative Panel today.**

For more information and to support our campaign,

visit [www.tampaforjustice.com](http://www.tampaforjustice.com).