



## **Communities United Against Police Brutality™**

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January 21, 2025

Republican Members  
House Higher Education Finance and Policy Committee  
State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard  
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Members:

We received an invitation to testify to your committee regarding the award our organization received from the University of Minnesota's Office of Public Engagement. However, I am unable to testify in person as I am already scheduled to present to students at University of St. Thomas Law School. Therefore, I tender this letter and ask that it be provided to the members and included in the record of the January 23, 2025 meeting.

At your January 16, 2025 meeting, Rep. Novotny misspoke in claiming our organization received a grant from the University of Minnesota. This is incorrect. On December 11, 2024, our organization received an award that consists of a piece of art glass that was presented to us at an awards ceremony along with a number of other recipients. It was a lovely ceremony and we are grateful for the recognition. We have been told that there is a nominal financial prize that comes with this award but we have not yet seen it. In sum, there is no grant as grants are contractual payments for future projects and we have no such agreement with the University of Minnesota.

Communities United Against Police Brutality is an all-volunteer organization in our 25th year. Throughout our history, we have worked with students from a number of schools including the University of Minnesota. We take our commitment to teaching students how to engage with the community very seriously and work hard to ensure their experience with us is educational and valuable. As a result, we have won a number of local and regional awards for our work with students. Through the University of Minnesota's service-learning program, we have worked with many hundreds of students over our history. Many of these students have returned to work with us for additional classes or to volunteer. Students for whom service learning is an option in class can choose from many organizations to work with. Those who choose to work with us typically include students planning to attend law school or going into law enforcement.

Communities United Against Police Brutality promotes professional, accountable, constitutional policing. We have been involved in rules advisory committee work and crafting model policies with the POST Board. We are currently recommending policy changes based on best practices and community expectations for the Minneapolis police department under the state consent decree. We have written legislation that ended fear-based training and ensures that the most appropriate responders attend to mental health crisis calls. Over the years, we have achieved many things that we are quite proud of and that increase safety for everyone. That the MPPOA and Alpha News refer to us as an "extremist org" doesn't make it so.

For justice,

*s/ Michelle Gross*

President