

# Ochs on Citizen Review Boards

The Bethlehem Gadfly George Floyd killing, Ochs, Holona, Police August 11, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts responding to the George Floyd killing* 

*Ever wonder about citizens involved in police misconduct matters?*

*Gadfly believes Allentown may be voting on a CRB tomorrow night. Will be interesting to see what happens there.*

*Gadfly was struck by such info on different forms of CRBs in the **Rushin article** discussed earlier: “Communities could elect civilians to a commission tasked with the creation of police disciplinary procedures, with recommendations from police management and union leaders. Communities could establish notice-and-comment procedures, similar to those employed by many administrative agencies, to promulgate disciplinary policies. Conversely, states could require communities to establish police disciplinary procedures in the same manner that they establish municipal ordinances—presumably through a public hearing and vote by local elected officials.”*

*Here are some notes by Prof Holona Ochs.*

## **Ochs, Citizen Review Boards**

### **Clips:**

CRBs are committees charged with providing oversight of police compliance with the law and potentially offering transparency, accountability, and input regarding the administrative processes.

Members of the public cite the following potential benefits of citizen oversight:

- (1) satisfy public concerns about the accountability of the police;
- (2) reassurance that the appropriate discipline is implemented for misconduct;
- (3) discourage police misconduct; and
- (4) improvement in the public understanding of police work.

[There are] four models of citizen review boards that fall within the reactive approach.

The Collaborative Audit model [is a proactive model].

Effective procedures for public review of citizen complaints against the police require a fundamental shift in the traditional handling of citizen complaints, and a complaint process that makes consistent efforts to inform citizens of the review process and receive all complaints, that provides thorough and unbiased evaluations, and that is likewise subject to review is extremely difficult to establish and maintain.

CRBs should be structured to facilitate cooperation, and the results of the independent investigations should produce findings and recommendations that require a formal response from political and administrative authorities.

In order for CRBs to function as either a specific or general deterrent, the disposition would have to lead to discipline consistently to impact policing outcomes, and the extent to which the mechanisms of internal and external oversight provide consistent sources of management information determine whether or not oversight is mutually reinforcing or simply inefficient.

Citizen Review Boards (CRBs) tend to be reactively rather than proactively designed, which can lead to a backlash by police over time.