

Hello my name is Debbie Flitman and I'm here tonight as a resident and a board member of the ACLU of RI. In the last week, council members should have received two letters from the ACLU about the state police report. In line with those letters, I am here to urge the city council to consider having an additional investigation done of Cranston Police Department practices.

It's important to emphasize what Cranston residents have learned about the police department through just this report, and a recent court decision. From the state police report, we have learned that high-ranking police officials engaged in questionable surveillance of two department employees. We know they engaged in questionable surveillance in at least one instance of a civilian employee. We know that police officials improperly accessed the state DMV database to obtain private information about the civilian employee. We learned that police officers apparently filed misleading if not false affidavits to obtain search warrants. And we also know that high-ranking officials manufactured evidence against Sgt. Josefsen in the form of a non-existent internal policy.

It's impossible to believe that these are just isolated incidents. In fact, we know they are not because a RI Supreme Court decision from last year substantiates the reasons for our concerns.

In that case, the court found that Cranston police officers engaged in illegal searches and seizures to obtain evidence against a criminal defendant. The Court also agreed

that police officers had filed misleading or false affidavits to obtain search warrants in that case. The court decision also raised questions about other practices of the department.

We believe the residents of Cranston and the State deserve to know how extensive this pattern of police misconduct may have been because it is clear that this is not just a matter of internal police politics. Among other things, an additional investigation could include conducting a random audit of state database access and payments for surveillance activities by the Department. But whatever the next steps, it would be a mistake to assume that this report has uncovered all of the problematic activities of the police department. While we have no reason to question the new path the current police chief has taken, that is not a reason for ignoring what may have taken place in the recent past. Thank you.