

# Press Statement

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From: Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression (CAPCR)

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## ***Citizen Involvement in Police Chief Search Jeopardized by O'Toole's Candidacy; CAPCR Calls for "Anyone but O'Toole" Call-In Campaign***

St. Louis—How could we have come so far and progressed so little?

The Coalition Against Police Crimes and Repression is launching a **CALL-IN CAMPAIGN: "Anyone but O'Toole!"** The community needs to stop Lawrence O'Toole from being installed as our permanent chief. Let Jimmie Edwards, the director of public safety, know how we feel. And let Mayor Krewson, who says she'll have a strong say in the decision, know that she cannot show such hypocrisy by asking for residents' input and then ignoring the will of the people.

With the advent of local control and the first-time ability to do a nationwide search for police chief, St. Louis embarked on an historic project of opening up the search for community input. The creation of a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) gave the promise of making transparent and responsive a former backroom process of selecting police chiefs by the Board of Police Commissioners.

Throughout this entire months-long process, the CAC sought community input and St. Louis spoke with a unified voice—we want a transformative chief who will bring an era of change.

The community most definitely did not want O'Toole. We gave a strong vote of no confidence in the man on whose watch we saw protesters beaten while handcuffed, maced while subdued and flat on the ground, kettled and arrested in mass without regard to guilt or innocence. We said 'no' to the chief who "owned the night." "No" to the chief who lied when a black officer was shot by his own white colleague. "No" to the chief under federal investigation and a federal court injunction for his outrageous responses to protests.

It was, therefore, a slap in the face of the community for O'Toole to appear as one of six finalists for the permanent police chief position. Such a choice threatens to discredit the entire enterprise. Was the fix in from the beginning? Will we have gone through this entire process only to have our expressed desire ignored in favor of a new round of repression?

Even if another candidate is chosen, O'Toole's inclusion is an outrage. He came into the group of finalists with a veto already issued by the people. His presence only took up a slot in the finalist pool that should have been open to a qualified candidate.

This disregard for strong public sentiment must not go unanswered. Jimmie Edward's phone number is 314-622-3391. His email address is edwardsj@stlouis-mo.gov. Lyda Krewson's phone number is 314-622-3201. Her email address is krewsonl@stlouis-mo.gov . Her twitter account is @LydaKrewson. Flood them with your response. The decision will be made soon. Don't delay.

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