

SUMMARY REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Date of Incident:	June 7, 2021
Time of Incident:	Unknown
Location of Incident:	Facebook- Aimee Terrell- Kessem.
Date of COPA Notification:	June 8, 2021
Time of COPA Notification:	2:15 P.M.

COPA received an Initiation Report from Sgt. Vega #809,¹ regarding a journalist, [REDACTED], who observed on Sgt. Amelia Kessem’s Facebook page which is named Aimee Terrell-Kessem, her posts which he believed were “clearly homophobic” and violated General Order G09-01-06.

II. INVOLVED PARTIES

Involved Sergeant #1:	Amelia Kessem, Star #2190, Employee ID# [REDACTED], Date of Appointment: 03/08/1999, Rank: Sgt, Unit of Assignment: 016, DOB: [REDACTED] 1976, Gender: Female, Race: White.
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III. ALLEGATIONS

Officer	Allegation	Finding / Recommendation
Sergeant Amelia Kessem	It is alleged that on or about June 7 th , 2021, via the world- wide web and www.Facebook.com , using the Facebook name, Ammie Terrell- Kessem, Sgt. Kessem engaged in misconduct through the following acts and/or omissions by; 1.Commenting or posting, “Went to the library today and this man who worked there tried to indoctrinate my 6-year-old with his gay pride decor! NOT OK!!! I had to tell him 3 times to stop!”	Sustained/Violation Noted.

¹ Attachment #9.

2. Commenting or posting, “Filing a complaint would go nowhere. The left thinks it is their duty to do things like this. The fact that this is even allowed to be inside a public building let alone the children’s section is absolutely absurd! I cannot wait to leave to this Sodom and Gomorrah!!!”

**Sustained/
Violation Noted.**

IV. APPLICABLE RULES AND LAWS

Rules

1. **Rule 2:** Any action or conduct which impedes the Department’s efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department.

2. **Rule 32:** Engaging in any public statements, interviews, activity, deliberation, or discussion pertaining to the Police Department which reasonably can be foreseen to impair the discipline, efficiency, public service, or public confidence in the Department or its personnel by: (a) false statements, or reckless, unsupported accusations. (b) the use of defamatory language, abusive language, invective, or epithets.

General Orders

1. **G01-05-06:** Social Media Outlets.

2. **G01-09:** Supervisory Responsibilities.

V. INVESTIGATION

a. Interviews

In her interview with COPA on Monday, October 4, 2021, **Sergeant Amelia Kessem #2190**,² stated when she wrote the above Facebook posts and comments on June 7th, 2021, she was in the library with her son; a man who worked there approached them and was showing her son rainbow windows that were displayed. She was under the impression that he was “grooming” her son. She did not want her son’s first conversation about pride month coming from this individual she did not know. She wanted to make clear in the interview that she was a devout Catholic and partook in a course with the church to be a certified “Virtus” trainer. Virtus trainers are a group of people within the Catholic church who are all certified to know what “grooming” is and how to stop it. She stated, “I do have some personal faith-based opinions about things, that should be made aware. I don’t hold any biases against people in a protected class, especially when I am on duty. I respect all people, especially those in the LGTBQIA (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) community. I would never do or say anything to them on duty that

² Attachment #25.

they would feel is disrespectful to them or their lifestyle.”³ During the interview she was emotional and mentioned she should have not posted that on Facebook.

At the time which these posts were visible on her Facebook page, Sgt. Kessem was also working as a realtor for Dream Town Realty. Sgt. Kessem’s co-worker at Dream Town Realty made her aware that her Facebook posts were captured on a Twitter link. The co-worker also informed Sgt. Kessem that her Facebook posts were offensive to the individual who made the Twitter post. Due to her employers at Dream Town Realty being aware of these Facebook posts from the Twitter link, she was let go from Dream Town Realty two weeks later. She was aware of the General Order G09-01-06, Social Media Outlets. She made sure that her Facebook page, “Ammie Terrell- Kessem”, had no pictures of her tagged or posted on Facebook with her and her Chicago Police Department (CPD) uniform. When she was informed that on her Facebook page was a link to a YouTube video of a commercial about her running for the Illinois House of Representatives for the 19th District, she denied being aware of the link. The link shows a video of her in a CPD uniform with no star number or employee number, it also, has the words that appear to be Chicago Police in the background with a red line through it. She stated, “I had nothing to do with that commercial, it was a Super PAC, that, actually by law on page 11 on the Illinois Board of Elections Code, prohibits me specifically from having any contact with that Super PAC that put that commercial out there. If I had the opportunity to have told them not to put a picture of me in my uniform in a commercial, I absolutely would have told them but by law, I was not allowed to speak to them about any of that.”⁴ She was remorseful that a person could have taken what she wrote on Facebook out of context. She acknowledged the posts could be insulting to a certain group such as the LGBTQIA community. She denied that these posts would bring discredit to CPD.

b. Digital Evidence

The **Facebook posts and comments**⁵ mention gay pride decor indoctrinating her 6-year-old son which is homophobic and refers to the City of Chicago as Sodom and Gomorrah.

³ Attachment #25 at 9:20.

⁴ Attachment #25 at 8:10.

⁵ Attachments #2 and #3.



c. Documentary Evidence

The **Initiation Report**⁶ details a journalist, [REDACTED], who observed on Sgt. Amelia Kessem’s Facebook page, which is named Aimee Terrell- Kessem, her posts which were “clearly homophobic” and violates General Order G09-01-06.

The **OIG Compliant Notification to COPA**,⁷ which was initiated by Investigator [REDACTED] was sent via email to COPA. The notification explains; OIG received an email with a link to the attached article regarding Chicago Police Department Sergeant Amelia "Ammie" Kessem.

The **Article** titled, “Chicago COP & GOP Committeeperson Investigated for homophobic comments, directed harassment campaign against “Antifa” teacher.”⁸

⁶ Attachment #9.

⁷ Attachment #12.

⁸ Attachment #11.

VI. LEGAL STANDARD

For each Allegation COPA must make one of the following findings:

1. Sustained - where it is determined the allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence;
2. Not Sustained - where it is determined there is insufficient evidence to prove the allegations by a preponderance of the evidence;
3. Unfounded - where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that an allegation is false or not factual; or
4. Exonerated - where it is determined by clear and convincing evidence that the conduct described in the allegation occurred, but it is lawful and proper.

A **preponderance of evidence** can be described as evidence indicating that it is **more likely than not** that the conduct reviewed complied with Department policy. *See Avery v. State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co.*, 216 Ill. 2d 100, 191 (2005), (a proposition is proved by a preponderance of the evidence when it has found to be more probably true than not). If the evidence gathered in an investigation establishes that it is more likely that the conduct complied with Department policy than that it did not, even if by a narrow margin, then the preponderance of the evidence standard is met.

Clear and convincing evidence is a higher standard than a preponderance of the evidence but lower than the "beyond-a-reasonable doubt" standard required to convict a person of a criminal offense. *See e.g., People v. Coan*, 2016 IL App (2d) 151036 (2016). Clear and Convincing can be defined as a "degree of proof, which, considering all the evidence in the case, produces the firm and abiding belief that it is highly probable that the proposition . . . is true." *Id.* at ¶ 28.

VII. ANALYSIS

1.Sgt. Kessem commented or posted, "Went to the library today and this man who worked there tried to indoctrinate my 6-year-old with his gay pride decor! NOT OK!!! I had to tell him 3 times to stop!"

When using social media, whether on or off duty, Department members are prohibited from posting, displaying, transmitting, or otherwise disseminating: any communications that discredit or reflect poorly on the Department, its vision, mission, values, or goals, confidential information related to Department training, activities, or on-going investigations without express written permission, content that is disparaging to a person or group based on race, color, sex, gender identity, age, religion, disability, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, marital status, parental status, military status, source of income, credit history, criminal record, criminal history, or any other protected class consistent with the Department directives titled "Human Rights and Human Resources" and "Prohibition Regarding Racial Profiling and Other Bias-Based Policing."⁹

⁹ General Order: G09-01-06, policy, C.

Sgt. Kessem posted on her publicly seen Facebook page the following; “Went to the library today and this man who worked there tried to indoctrinate my 6-year-old with his gay pride decor! NOT OK!!! I had to tell him 3 times to stop!” and “Filing a complaint would go nowhere. The left thinks it is their duty to do things like this. The fact that this is even allowed to be inside a public building let alone the children’s section is absolutely absurd! I cannot wait to leave this Sodom and Gomorrah!!!” As stated above, on her Facebook page, there is a link to a YouTube video that shows her in a CPD uniform, however, no star number or employee number are visible. Also, seen in the background of the video are words that read Chicago Police with a red line through it. She previously ran for the Illinois House of Representatives for the 19th District, which led to televised commercials for anyone to see while watching TV. The above statements, show that Sgt. Kessem is representing the Department even through her social media. Those post are seen as biased based and homophobic. Such posts may be insulting to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA) community and citizens of the City of Chicago. A sergeant working in any police department; certainly, a sergeant for CPD should not have these types of biases and certainly not post those types of biases on social media. Those types of biases can affect policing and the citizens of Chicago. Which leads, the above allegation to be **SUSTAINED**.

2. Sgt. Kessem commented or posted, “Filing a complaint would go nowhere. The left thinks it is their duty to do things like this. The fact that this is even allowed to be inside a public building let alone the children’s section is absolutely absurd! I cannot wait to leave to this Sodom and Gomorrah!!!”

Social media outlets, when used in a proper manner, can reinforce the Department's relationship with the public, build community support, and assist in solving crime. Department members have a constitutional right to express their views under the First Amendment. However, Department members may be subject to discipline for violating the provisions of this directive. Any social media participation made pursuant to a Department member's official duties is not considered protected speech under the First Amendment.¹⁰

As stated above, all police officers within the CPD have to follow the Department’s Rules and Regulations and are representing the Department on and off duty, even on social media. General Order G09-01-06; “Social Media Outlets”, details, what is posted on social media for members of the CPD can be connected to the Department, thus, representing the Department. CPD members should also be aware and never assume their posts on social media are protected or secure. Stating the above comments, are potentially insulting to the LGBTQIA community and the citizens of Chicago. These comments and posts on Facebook should not have been posted by a CPD employee, especially a sergeant that supervises officers under them. It is clear that Sgt. Kessem’s Facebook page has connected her to CPD, which lead her to be considered a representative of the Department, even on social media. Those remarks have violated General Order G09-01-06, leading the allegation to be **SUSTAINED**.

VIII. RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINE FOR SUSTAINED ALLEGATIONS

a. Sgt. Kessem

¹⁰ General Order: G09-01-06, Policy, A.

i. Complimentary and Disciplinary History

1. Sgt. Kessem has received: a 2004 Crime Reduction Ribbon Award, a 2009 Crime Reduction Award, a 2019 Crime Reduction Award, an Attendance Recognition Award, eleven Complimentary Letters, five Department Commendation, eleven Emblem of Recognition- Physical Fitness, twenty-eight Honorable Mentions, a Life Saving Award, a NATO Summit Service Award, and a Presidential Election Deployment Award in 2008.

2. Sgt. Kessem has no disciplinary history.

ii. Recommended Penalty, by Allegation

1. Allegation No. 1

- a. COPA recommends Violation Noted.
- b. Mitigating factors: Sgt. Kessem’s Complimentary History demonstrates that normally she is attentive to duties and responsibilities as a sworn member of CPD.
- c. Aggravating factors: Sgt. Kessem’s Facebook posts and comments which are above, are homophobic and offensive.

2. Allegation No. 2

- a. COPA recommends Violation Noted.
- b. Mitigating factors: Sgt. Kessem’s Complimentary History demonstrates that normally she is attentive to duties and responsibilities as a sworn member of CPD.
- c. Aggravating factors: Sgt. Kessem’s Facebook posts and comments which are above, are homophobic and offensive.

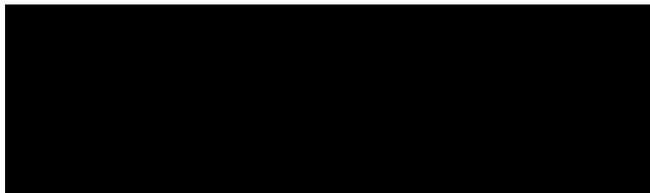
IX. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis set forth above, COPA makes the following findings:

Officer	Allegation	Finding / Recommendation
Sgt. Amelia Kessem	It is alleged that on or about June 7th, 2021, via the world- wide web and www.Facebook.com, using the Facebook name, Ammie Terrell-	

	<p>Kessem, Sgt. Kessem engaged in misconduct through the following acts and/or omissions by;</p> <p>1.Commenting or posting, “Went to the library today and this man who worked there tried to indoctrinate my 6-year-old with his gay pride decor! NOT OK!!! I had to tell him 3 times to stop!”</p> <p>2.Commenting or posting, “Filing a complaint would go nowhere. The left thinks it is their duty to do things like this. The fact that this is even allowed to be inside a public building let alone the children’s section is absolutely absurd! I cannot wait to leave to this Sodom and Gomorrah!!!”</p>	<p>Sustained/ Violation Noted¹¹</p> <p>Sustained/ Violation Noted</p>
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Approved:



Angela Hearts- Glass
Deputy Chief Investigator

11-29-2021

Date

¹¹ COPA recommends Sgt. Kessem complete a course on Implicit Bias Training.

Appendix A

Assigned Investigative Staff

Squad#:	12
Investigator:	Madilyn Kohs
Supervising Investigator:	Andrew Dalkin
Deputy Chief Administrator:	Angela Hearts- Glass