



**Brandon Johnson**  
Mayor

**Department of Police · City of Chicago**  
3510 S. Michigan Avenue · Chicago, Illinois 60653

**Larry B. Snelling**  
Superintendent

February 21, 2025

Andrea Kersten  
Chief Administrator  
Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA)  
1615 West Chicago Avenue, 4th Floor  
Chicago, Illinois 60622

Re: Superintendent's Partial Non-Concurrence with Findings  
Complaint Log No. 2023-0002332  
Officer Steven Rowling # 16670  
Officer Sebastian Gonzalez # 17233  
Officer Anthony Rodriguez # 10041

Dear Chief Administrator Kersten:

After a careful review of the above referenced complaint log number investigation, the Chicago Police Department (Department) does not concur with both of the recommended sustained findings as they pertain to Officer Steven Rowling # 16670, Officer Sebastian Gonzalez # 17233, and Officer Anthony Rodriguez # 10041. Pursuant to the Municipal Code of Chicago, the Department provides the following comments.

The COPA investigation recommended a penalty of up to 30-day suspension for Officer Steven Rowling and for Officer Anthony Rodriguez after concluding that they:

1. Searched the vehicle of [REDACTED] without justification;
2. Failed to complete an Investigatory Stop Report.

The COPA investigation also recommended a penalty of up to 30-day suspension for Officer Sebastian Gonzalez after concluding that he:

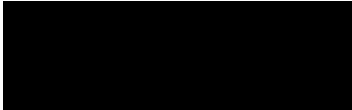
1. Failed to complete an Investigatory Stop Report.

The Department does concur with the recommended sustained finding for Allegation #2 for Officer Steven Rowling and Officer Anthony Rodriguez and Allegation #1 for Officer Sebastian Gonzalez and recommends a two (2) days suspension for all three members.

However, the Department does not concur with the recommended sustained finding for Allegation #1 for Officer Anthony Rodriguez and Officer Steven Rowling and recommends an alternate finding of Not Sustained. Officer Rowling had stated that he and his partners were conducting a narcotics search based on the scent of burnt cannabis. In its summary report, COPA states that "Officers who merely smell burnt cannabis no longer have probable cause to search a subject's vehicle without a

warrant." SRI at page 3. COPA then summarizes the Illinois Supreme Court case captioned People v. Redmond in which the Court held that the smell of burnt cannabis is not sufficient alone to form probable cause to perform a search. While the Department does agree that the Supreme Court issued this ruling, the Department's non-concurrence is based on the fact that the court issued its ruling on September 19, 2024. The incident at issue occurred on May 23, 2023, almost 16 months earlier. At the time of the incident, vehicle searches based on suspected cannabis smell was still unsettled law and the officer's actions were lawful and within policy at the time.

The Department looks forward to discussing this matter with you pursuant to MCC 2-78-130(a)(iii).  
Sincerely,



Larry B. Snelling  
Superintendent  
Chicago Police Department