



August 7, 2026

Mr. Max A. Caproni
Executive Director, Chicago Police Board
30 North LaSalle Street, Suite 1220
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Via Email

RE: Request for Review, Log #2021-2130, Officer Larrick West, # 17947

Dear Mr. Caproni,

Pursuant to Municipal Code of Chicago § 2-78-130 and Chicago Police Board Rules of Procedure § VI, this letter constitutes COPA's Request for Review of the non-concurrence issued by the Superintendent of the Chicago Police Department ("CPD") in Log #2021-0002130.

For the reasons set forth below and in COPA's Final Summary Report ("FSR") dated March 21, 2024, there is a compelling legal and evidentiary basis to support COPA's disciplinary recommendation for Officer Larrick West.

I. BACKGROUND

A. Relevant Factual Background¹

On June 2, 2021, Sergeant James Butler of the CPD initiated an investigation alleging that Officer Larrick West, Star #17947, had physically abused [REDACTED] during an incident that occurred while Officer West was transporting [REDACTED] and his younger brother, [REDACTED] in his vehicle. COPA served two allegations against Officer West: (1) that he used unnecessary physical force against [REDACTED] by slamming him to the ground; and (2) that he struck [REDACTED] in the face with his hand, without justification.

During his statement to COPA, Officer West admitted that, while driving with [REDACTED] in the vehicle, he became upset when [REDACTED] cursed at him and continued speaking after being told to stop, and that in response he "took [his] fingers and ... hit him on his lips."² [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] each described Officer West striking [REDACTED] during the encounter, and Officer West submitted photographs of injuries he stated he sustained when [REDACTED] struck him.³

Following its investigation, COPA reached a finding of Not Sustained as to the first allegation for insufficient evidence, and a finding of Sustained as to the second allegation—striking [REDACTED] in the face without justification—in violation of Rules 2, 3, 8, and 9. Applying the fact-specific factors that Illinois courts use to assess the reasonableness of corporal punishment, COPA determined that Officer West's

¹ A more detailed factual summary can be found in the FSR.

² Att. 36 (Final Summary Report) at 3; see Att. 34 (Officer West statement to COPA), pg. 17, lns. 2–3.

³ See Att. 36 at 1–4; Att. 2 ([REDACTED] statement to COPA); Att. 3 ([REDACTED] statement to COPA); Atts. 19–22 (photographs submitted by Officer West).

decision to strike [REDACTED] was most likely an expression of anger and frustration rather than reasonable corporal punishment and was therefore unjustified. COPA recommended a suspension of 10 to 30 days.⁴

B. Disputed Findings and Recommendations

CPD does not concur with COPA's Sustained finding on the second allegation or with its penalty recommendation, and instead recommends a finding of Unfounded.⁵ The Superintendent advances several arguments: (1) that the incident was a private family matter involving lawful corporal punishment that did not relate to Officer West's police duties and (2) that if the corporal punishment was not reasonable it would constitute abuse, yet DCFS found no abuse.⁶

C. Applicable Law

COPA sustained the second allegation as a violation of Rules 2, 3, 8, and 9 of the CPD Rules and Regulations. Rule 2 prohibits any action or conduct that impedes the Department's efforts to achieve its policy and goals or brings discredit upon the Department. Rule 3 prohibits any failure to promote the Department's efforts to implement its policy or accomplish its goals. Rule 8 prohibits disrespect to or maltreatment of any person, "*while on or off duty.*"⁷ Rule 9 prohibits engaging in any unjustified verbal or physical altercation with any person, "*while on or off duty.*"⁸ By their express terms, Rules 8 and 9 reach conduct committed while a member is off duty.

COPA's findings are governed by defined standards of proof. A Sustained finding is appropriate where the allegation is supported by a preponderance of the evidence. An Unfounded finding is appropriate only where it is determined, by clear and convincing evidence, that the allegation is false or not factual. An Exonerated finding is appropriate where it is determined, by clear and convincing evidence, that the conduct described in the allegation occurred but was lawful and proper. Those distinctions are central to this Request for Review. COPA's jurisdiction over these allegations is established by the Municipal Code of Chicago.⁹

II. ARGUMENT

A. CPD's Rules Expressly Extend to Off-Duty Conduct.

The Superintendent's argument that this incident was a private family matter unrelated to Officer West's police duties cannot be reconciled with the plain text of the rules he is governed by as a police officer. Rule 8 prohibits maltreatment of any person while on or off duty, and Rule 9 prohibits any unjustified physical altercation with any person while on or off duty. Rule 2 reaches any conduct that brings discredit upon CPD. None of these rules contains an exception for conduct occurring in a member's home, vehicle, or family setting, and the Superintendent identifies no authority for the carve-out he proposes. The

⁴ Att. 36 at 5–7.

⁵ Att. 38 (Superintendent's Non-Concurrence with Findings and Penalty Recommendation).

⁶ The Superintendent also argues there is no reasonable explanation for the delay in completing this investigation. Whether there was just cause for the delay in COPA's investigation is more appropriately addressed in the grievance process. *See Agreement between the City of Chicago and the Chicago John Dineen Lodge #7*, § 8.10 (effective July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2027) (providing arbitrators with the "specific authority" to inquire into any delay in the investigation). The Superintendent also argues that the record does not establish that the vehicle was in motion when the physical contact occurred, undercutting COPA's characterization of the conduct as exceptionally dangerous. Even if that were true, which COPA does not concede, that argument goes to the appropriate penalty, rather than the sufficiency of the findings. COPA maintains its initial penalty recommendation is appropriate.

⁷ Chicago Police Department Rules of Conduct, from the Rules and Regulations of the Chicago Police Department Adopted and Published by the Police Board, Rule 8 (emphasis added).

⁸ Chicago Police Department Rules of Conduct, from the Rules and Regulations of the Chicago Police Department Adopted and Published by the Police Board, Rule 9 (emphasis added).

⁹ MCC § 2-78-120.

off-duty, domestic character of the conduct does not remove it from the rules; the rules expressly extend to it.

The conduct sustained here—a sworn officer striking his 13-year-old child in the face, in anger, while transporting him—is not a trivial matter of personal choice. As a member sworn to protect the public, Officer West’s conduct toward his child bears directly on CPD’s legitimacy and falls within the discredit that Rule 2 is meant to prevent. That conduct also falls squarely within Rule 8’s prohibition on maltreatment of any person and Rule 9’s prohibition on unjustified physical altercations. Accepting the Superintendent’s position would mean that the more such misconduct is confined to the home or to family members, the less accountable it becomes.¹⁰

Such conduct warrants independent civilian review, rather than deference to a member’s private sphere. Officers carry firearms, are trained in the use of force, understand the locations of victim shelters and the workings of the response and criminal justice systems, and operate within a professional culture than can discourage reporting against one of its own. Each of these features tend to suppress disclosure and to place victims, often intimate partners and children, at heightened risk.¹¹ Treating officer-perpetrated abuse as a purely private matter would reproduce precisely the accountability gap that civilian oversight exists to close.

B. The DCFS “Unfounded” Determination Does Not Control COPA’s Findings and Does Not Establish That the Conduct Was Reasonable.

The Superintendent relies heavily on DCFS’s determination that the allegation of child abuse was unfounded, and reasons that because COPA found the corporal punishment unreasonable, it must have incorrectly concluded that Officer West’s conduct was child abuse, in conflict with DCFS’s unfounded finding. This argument conflates two distinct inquiries governed by different legal standards.

DCFS assessed whether Officer West’s conduct met the statutory threshold for child abuse under the standards that govern its investigations. COPA assessed a different question: whether Officer West’s conduct constituted unjustified force and unreasonable corporal punishment in violation of the CPD Rules, applying a preponderance of the evidence standard. A determination that conduct does not rise to the level of statutory child abuse is not a determination that the conduct was reasonable, justified, or compliant with the CPD Rules of Conduct. The two standards are not equivalent, and DCFS’s finding does not mean that misconduct did not occur.

DCFS did not find that no physical discipline occurred. On the contrary, it expressly acknowledged that Officer West administered physical discipline and struck [REDACTED] and concluded only that the conduct did not appear to rise to the level of abuse.¹² COPA is not arguing that Officer West is guilty of child abuse, but finds by a preponderance of the evidence that he struck his minor child without justification, in violation of CPD rules that expressly prohibit such conduct, on or off-duty.

¹⁰ Nor does the “corporal punishment” framing place the matter beyond COPA’s review, especially where COPA concluded that Officer West exceeded the limits of reasonable corporal punishment. That conduct falls squarely within Rule 8’s prohibition on maltreatment of any person and Rule 9’s prohibition on unjustified physical altercations. Corporal punishment harms children’s physical and mental health, increases behavioral problems over time, and has little evidence of positive effect. *See* Corporal punishment of children: the public health impact. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2025. <https://doi.org/10.2471/B09424>.

¹¹ *See e.g.* Brenda L. Russell & Nicholas Pappas, “Officer involved domestic violence: A future of uniform response and transparency,” *International Journal of Police Science and Management* 20, no. 2 (June 2018), pgs. 134-142, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325717460_Officer_involved_domestic_violence_A_future_of_uniform_response_and_transparency.

¹² Att. 36 at 4; *see* Att. 24 (DCFS Investigation Transition/Handoff Document), pg. 32 (concluding that, while the father administered physical discipline, it did not appear to rise to the level of abuse).

The Superintendent treats Officer West's forthright admission as though it were a deficiency in COPA's analysis. It is the opposite. Officer West's admission that he struck [REDACTED] together with the consistent accounts of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and the CPD and DCFS records, are precisely the preponderant evidence that support a Sustained finding. That the proof here is direct and largely uncontested is a reason to affirm COPA's finding, not to reject it.

C. An Unfounded Finding Cannot Be Reconciled with Officer West's Admission That He Struck [REDACTED]

The Superintendent's recommended finding of Unfounded is legally incompatible with the evidentiary record and, indeed, with the Superintendent's own non-concurrence. An Unfounded finding requires clear and convincing evidence that the allegation is false or not factual. Here, the opposite is true: Officer West admitted during his statement to COPA that he struck [REDACTED] and the Superintendent's non-concurrence expressly concedes that Officer West was forthcoming about striking [REDACTED] and did not deny making physical contact.¹³ The occurrence of the striking is not in dispute.

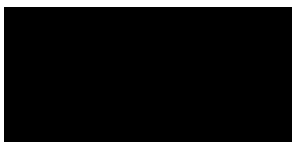
An allegation that the accused member admits, and that is corroborated by multiple witness accounts and by CPD and DCFS records, cannot be deemed false or non-factual. The Unfounded standard is not merely unmet on this record—the record affirmatively contradicts it. The Superintendent's recommendation thus selects the one disposition that the evidence forecloses. Whatever disagreement may exist as to the appropriate penalty, a finding that the allegation did not occur cannot stand where the member concedes that it did.

What the Superintendent actually disputes is whether the striking was justified as reasonable corporal punishment. If Officer West's conduct was justified, then the Superintendent should have advanced an Exonerated finding, which would require clear and convincing evidence that the conduct was lawful and proper. COPA cannot conclude that Officer West's conduct—striking a child in anger—presents clear and convincing evidence of lawful and proper conduct.

III. CONCLUSION

For these reasons, COPA maintains that the Superintendent has failed to meet his burden of showing that COPA's findings and recommendation in this matter are unreasonable. The Superintendent's recommended finding of Unfounded is incompatible with the member's own admission and CPD and DCFS reports, rests on a misstatement of COPA's analysis, and depends on an off-duty exception that the rules do not contain. Accordingly, COPA respectfully requests that the Chicago Police Board reject the Superintendent's non-concurrence in this matter and accept COPA's findings and recommendation in full.

Respectfully,



Lakenya White
Chief Administrator
Civilian Office of Police Accountability

¹³ Att 38.