

Stuart Relay

From: Susan A [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, April 15, 2025 2:57 PM
To: House State Affairs
Subject: Public Testimony Ross

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Public Testimony Regarding the Nomination of David Ross

Honorable Committee Members,

I stand before you today to express my strong opposition to the nomination of David Ross for a position on the [Board Name]. While Mr. Ross has had a long tenure in law enforcement, including as the Police Chief of Kenai, his record does not demonstrate the qualities necessary for a position on this board, particularly in an era where we must prioritize transparency, accountability, and adherence to constitutional law.

1. Lack of Commitment to Oversight and Reform:

Mr. Ross has demonstrated a reluctance to implement substantial reforms that align with contemporary best practices in law enforcement. In particular, his recent actions in Kenai suggest an inclination towards maintaining outdated and unenforceable laws. For example, Mr. Ross led the repeal of laws banning public sleeping, begging, and curfew violations, citing their vagueness and potential conflicts with constitutional rights. While it is commendable that he is attempting to align with legal standards, his actions also reveal a fundamental reluctance to lead progressive reforms that balance law enforcement needs with the protection of individual rights. A board member should be proactive in championing reform and ensuring that law enforcement practices are consistently evolving in line with best practices and civil rights protections.

2. Inconsistent with Principles of Accountability and Transparency:

Under Mr. Ross's leadership, the Kenai Police Department received accreditation from the Oregon Accreditation Alliance, which certainly shows an interest in maintaining certain standards. However, while accreditation is valuable, it is merely the beginning of a commitment to true accountability. Mr. Ross's focus appears to be on maintaining a "business as usual" approach, rather than actively working to bring about systemic changes that address the broader issues of police accountability, racial profiling, and the disproportionate impacts of law enforcement on marginalized communities. A qualified board member should possess the foresight and courage to challenge status quo practices that fail to serve the broader needs of the public.

3. Risk of Reinforcing a Narrow Law Enforcement Perspective:

David Ross's approach to policing, based on his public actions and statements, appears heavily centered around traditional, rigid enforcement practices rather than fostering community-oriented

policing or understanding the social contexts of law enforcement. A member of this board must have a nuanced, progressive perspective that includes a deep understanding of both public safety and the community's civil rights. Mr. Ross's track record shows a lack of engagement with the broader, necessary discussions surrounding modern policing techniques, and as such, he may not be well-suited to a board role that requires forward-thinking and inclusive leadership.

4. Alignment with Legal and Constitutional Standards:

Finally, Mr. Ross's leadership in repealing laws that were likely unenforceable due to their conflict with evolving constitutional protections around homelessness and personal freedoms shows a respect for legal constraints. However, this should not be confused with an advocacy for civil liberties or a proactive stance on balancing law enforcement duties with the protections of fundamental rights. A board member must demonstrate not just an understanding of constitutional law but also the ability to advocate for policies that ensure both public safety and the preservation of individual rights, particularly for vulnerable groups.

David Ross's professional record reveals a law enforcement leader who maintains traditional practices without pushing for broader reform or progressive change. His tenure does not show the visionary leadership needed for a board member tasked with ensuring that law enforcement practices are aligned with constitutional principles, progressive reforms, and the protection of civil liberties. I urge this body to reject his nomination based on his insufficient alignment with the values of transparency, accountability, and constitutional fidelity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Susan Allmeroth
Two Rivers
Myself

Reference

Board, R. (2024, May 16). Kenai repeals laws on public sleeping, begging and curfew. KDLL. Retrieved from <https://www.kdll.org>

This article provides the background on the repeal of outdated laws on public sleeping, begging, and curfew, which were led by Police Chief David Ross. It also highlights the legal reasoning behind their repeal, based on their vagueness and enforceability issues.

City of Kenai. (2024). Kenai Police Department accreditation history. City of Kenai.

This document outlines the accreditation of the Kenai Police Department under the Oregon Accreditation Alliance and provides context on Mr. Ross's leadership in maintaining these standards.

Ross, D. (2024). Public safety in Kenai: A comprehensive review. Kenai Police Department.

This report, authored by David Ross, discusses his approach to law enforcement, including his position on various public safety issues, law enforcement practices, and his focus on maintaining the status quo in policing.

U.S. Supreme Court. (2023). U.S. Supreme Court decision on public sleeping and homeless rights.

Relevant court case information on the U.S. Supreme Court's decisions regarding laws surrounding homelessness and public sleeping, offering insight into the evolving legal framework that affects such laws.