



# NAACP

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## **St. Louis City NAACP Seeks Charter Amendment – Independent Investigations Unit in the St. Louis Circuit Attorney Office**

**St. Louis City, Missouri** - The use of a full-time team of detectives charged with making sure use of deadly force is legal by scrutinizing every St. Louis city officer who kills or wounds someone with a gun has a critical gap with respect to ensuring independence by permitting Employer Agencies to investigate their own officers. The problem with this practice is plain enough. Merrick Bobb, the court-appointed monitor overseeing the implementation of a consent decree between the United States Department of Justice (USDOJ) and the City of Seattle, has stated that “self-policing . . . necessarily and unavoidably produce[s] biased result[s]” because “even reasonable, honest, and well-intentioned police investigators simply cannot overcome the pressures from all sides that come to bear on . . . investigations of an officer-involved shooting . . . or a serious use of force on the street.” Walter Katz, a career law enforcement watchdog who currently serves as San Jose’s independent police auditor, similarly observed, “[w]hen the investigator and the subject of the investigation are connected to the same organization, there is a natural impulse to interpret evidence in a way that supports the conclusion the interpreter would prefer.” And even if this “natural impulse” could be overcome, USDOJ experts believe agencies’ investigating themselves still undermines the public’s trust in the police and public perception of fairness in the investigation.

Thus the St. Louis City NAACP will seek the following Charter change:

**Describing and setting forth a proposal to the voters, at an election to be held on \_\_\_\_\_, to amend the Charter of the City of St. Louis to designate an Independent Investigations Unit in the Circuit Attorney Office as the primary agency to investigate criminal conduct arising out of critical incidents in the City involving officer-involved shootings, upon the Circuit Attorney’s establishment of the Unit; the Circuit Attorney shall have the right to suspend any and all internal and/or administrative investigation until the Circuit Attorney Office investigation is completed; to provide for development of a protocol for the Circuit Attorney to staff and coordinate the Unit; and to establish the Independent Investigations Unit Fund for the operation of the Unit and require that an amount equal to 0.1% of the annual budgets of the Police Department and funds for additional costs of the Unit to be allocated annually to the Fund, for so long as the Circuit Attorney maintains the Unit**