



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 30, 2026

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD MEMBERS DR. KITTY CALAVITA AND JULIET (“JULIE”) LEFTWICH, J.D., ANNOUNCE RESIGNATION

BERKELEY, CA — The Police Accountability Board (PAB) and the Office of the Director of Police Accountability (ODPA) acknowledge the resignation of Board Member Dr. Kitty Calavita and Board Member Juliet (“Julie”) Leftwich, J.D., who have jointly announced that they are stepping down from the Berkeley Police Accountability Board.

Dr. Calavita and Ms. Leftwich are the most tenured members of Berkeley’s current oversight body. Both previously served on the Police Review Commission (PRC)—the first civilian oversight body in the nation with independent authority to investigate complaints against police officers—and continued that service when voters approved the creation of the PAB in 2020.

About Dr. Kitty Calavita

Board Member Dr. Kitty Calavita is a sociologist, whose work focuses on the sociology of law, and criminology. She is the Chancellor's Professor Emerita at University of California, Irvine and Distinguished Affiliate at the Center for the Study of Law and Society at UC Berkeley. As a long-serving member of the PRC and later the PAB, Dr. Calavita played a central role in:

- Developing policies to limit searches of individuals solely because they were on supervised release;
- Crafting a comprehensive use of force policy that emphasized the sanctity of life and core principles of accountability and transparency;
- Chairing the policies, practices and procedures review of major incidents such as the Downtown/Bike Task Force texting matter;

- Co-chairing, along with Board Member Leftwich, the PAB Committee on Final Regulations for handling investigations and complaints.

Her combination of rigorous research, deep community engagement, and decades-long commitment to civilian oversight has provided the PAB with exceptional analytical and historical perspective.

About Juliet (“Julie”) Leftwich, J.D.

Board Member Juliet (“Julie”) Leftwich, J.D., is an attorney and the former Legal Director of the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, where she helped draft, enact and defend hundreds of state and local gun safety laws in California and nationwide. Since leaving the Law Center in 2017 to pursue her passion for other social and criminal justice issues, she has served on the Berkeley Police Review Commission and Chaired the Berkeley Commission on the Status of Women. She is currently a member of the Alameda County Behavioral Health Advisory Board, where she Co-Chairs the Criminal Justice Committee and serves on the Care First, Jails Last Ad Hoc Committee.

As a member of both the PRC and the PAB, Ms. Leftwich has:

- Helped lead complex policy and practice reviews involving use of force, vehicle pursuits and body worn cameras;
- Brought a sustained focus on civil rights, transparency, and careful legal analysis to the Board’s work;
- Co-chaired, along with Dr. Calavita, the PAB Committee on Final Regulations for handling investigations and complaints and chaired the PAB’s Policy Review Subcommittee.

Her legal expertise and collaborative approach have been instrumental in translating community concerns into concrete policy recommendations.

Concerns Raised in Their Joint Resignation Statement

In their joint resignation statement, Dr. Calavita and Ms. Leftwich describe longstanding concerns about the Board’s ability to fully exercise its voter-approved authority, including challenges in accessing records, sustaining prior policy reforms, and completing permanent regulations for the PAB. As they write,

We know that the PAB is only an advisory body. If our findings and policy recommendations have not always been accepted, that is understandable. What is unacceptable is the consistent pattern of reversals, the delays in

providing information critical to doing our job, and the ongoing rollbacks of policies previously agreed to after extensive research and collaboration.

For more than half a century, Berkeley was a model for other cities seeking meaningful police oversight. No more. Over 84% of Berkeley voters established and empowered the Police Accountability Board, but their will has been ignored and the advances they envisioned have often been subverted.

The full resignation statement, as submitted by Dr. Calavita and Board Member Leftwich to the City Council and relevant stakeholders, is attached to this release and is available online at:

<https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2026-01/Joint%20Resignation%20Statement%20of%20PAB%20Members%20Calavita%20and%20Leftwich.pdf>

PAB and ODPa Acknowledging Their Service and Institutional Knowledge

PAB Chair, Joshua Cayetano, emphasized the depth of their contributions and what their departure means for the Board:

As the most tenured members of the Police Accountability Board, Dr. Calavita and Board Member Leftwich have provided an irreplaceable depth of institutional knowledge. Their experience on both the PRC and the PAB, coupled with their academic and legal expertise, has helped ground our deliberations in history, law, and community values. We are deeply grateful for their years of service to the people of Berkeley. I thank them both for their many years of service to the PAB and PRC. I am so grateful to have learned from, worked with, been frustrated with, laughed with, and been supported by both of them. I will seriously miss their commitment to oversight on the board, their candor, and their wisdom.

Director of Police Accountability Hansel Alejandro Aguilar underscored both their individual contributions and the broader context in which their resignation occurs:

Dr. Calavita and Ms. Leftwich have been pillars of civilian oversight in Berkeley,” said Hansel Alejandro Aguilar, Director of Police Accountability. “They have been the conscience and institutional memory of Berkeley’s enhanced (through Measure II) oversight system. As a sociologist and a civil-rights lawyer, respectively, they brought the best of academia and public-interest law into a space that often resists scrutiny. Their departure

leaves a real void- especially now, when the community has legitimate questions about whether the powers created for oversight are truly being honored in day-to-day decision-making. Nationally, we are witnessing a troubling trend: oversight structures are created with great promise, only to be constrained when they begin to function as intended. The concerns raised by Dr. Calavita and Board Member Leftwich about access to information, the durability of reforms, and the weight given to community-driven recommendations should not be minimized or dismissed. They are a warning sign- and an opportunity- for Berkeley to decide whether it will be a place where oversight is symbolic, or a place where independent, community- rooted accountability is allowed to do its job.

The PAB will continue its work reviewing police policies, hearing community concerns, and making recommendations to promote constitutional, effective, and trusted policing in Berkeley. The Board currently has five of its nine seats vacant, in addition to the alternate position, meaning only 44% of its regular seats are filled. Recruitment and appointment of new Board members to fill the vacant seats will follow the process established in the City Charter and implementing ordinances.

In a joint statement, Chair Cayetano and Director Aguilar emphasized that even with these departures, the City's commitment to meaningful oversight must continue:

“We honor Dr. Calavita and Board Member Leftwich for their principled service,” jointly affirmed Chair Cayetano, and Director Hansel Alejandro Aguilar. “Their departure underscores the importance of ensuring that the Board has the information, independence, and support it needs to fulfill the mandate Berkeley voters approved. Our commitment to that mission remains steadfast.”

About the Police Accountability Board (PAB):

The purpose of the Police Accountability Board is to promote public trust through independent, objective, civilian oversight of the Berkeley Police Department, provide community participation in setting and reviewing Police Department policies, practices, and procedures, and provide a means for prompt, impartial and fair investigation of complaints brought by members of the public against sworn employees of the Berkeley Police Department.

About the Office of the Director of Police Accountability (ODPA):

The purpose of the Director of Police Accountability is to investigate complaints filed against sworn employees of the Berkeley Police Department, to reach an independent finding as to the facts, and to recommend corrective action where warranted. The

Director of Police Accountability may also serve as the Secretary to the Police Accountability Board and assist the Board in carrying out the duties prescribed herein.

For further information or inquiries, please contact:

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Attachments:

1. Joint Resignation Statement of Police Accountability Board Members Kitty Calavita and Juliet Leftwich

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**Joint Resignation Statement of Police Accountability Board Members
Kitty Calavita and Juliet Leftwich**

It is with sadness that we announce our joint resignation from the Berkeley Police Accountability Board (PAB).

In 2020, Berkeley voters overwhelmingly approved the creation of the PAB to “promote public trust through independent, objective, civilian oversight of the Berkeley Police Department...” The PAB was created to enhance the powers of the Berkeley Police Review Commission (PRC), established by voter initiative in 1973 as the first civilian oversight body in the nation with independent authority to investigate complaints against police officers. Having served on both the PRC and the PAB, however, we have seen firsthand that the PAB has not been permitted to exercise its expanded oversight authority and is even *less* empowered than its predecessor.

During our tenure on the PRC, we worked collaboratively with the Berkeley Police Department and the previous Chief of Police on several aspects of our work, including a variety of policy and practice reviews. Although some issues were contentious, we were able to achieve many important policy reforms, including a policy to prohibit police from searching people solely because they were on supervised release, and a comprehensive policy governing the use of force.

Unfortunately, reforms that were achieved by the PRC are now being undone. The limitation on police searches of people on supervised release, for example, which had been worked out through careful collaboration during eighteen months of meetings, was subsequently revisited by the City Council and narrowed.

More recently, in December, the Department presented the PAB with a last-minute draft of draconian changes to the use of force policy which had been painstakingly crafted by the PRC with significant input from the prior Chief and his staff and subsequently approved by City Council. Although purportedly intended to “streamline” the policy, the redlines completely eviscerated the document. Language regarding the sanctity of life was removed, together with the seven Core Principles of the policy (which include a commitment to “ensuring accountability and transparency, and striving to increase trust with our community”). Although the Department stated that they will work with the PAB on the final version of the new policy, it’s doubtful that any real collaboration is possible given how radical the changes are and how abruptly the PAB was informed about them.

A further obstacle to the PAB’s exercise of its voter-approved authority has been the difficulty accessing essential records. Since its inception, the PAB has spent almost as

much time and energy fighting to secure Charter-mandated access to Police Department records as it has on actual oversight.

A case in point relates to the PAB investigation of the Downtown Task Force/Bike Force texting scandal, one of the most shocking incidents during our tenure. Because no formal complaint about the egregious texts was filed with the Office of the Director of Police Accountability, the PAB was limited to undertaking a policy and practices review. We soon learned that we would not be allowed to access information gathered by the outside law firm the City hired to investigate. At first, we were not even permitted to *read* the firm's final report. Only after many months of insistent memos, our own legal analyses, and the threat of a subpoena (which, contrary to the clear words of the Charter, we were initially told we were not authorized to issue), was the PAB allowed to read the final report and eventually to hear the audiotapes of officer interviews. Although the report we produced contained detailed suggestions for policy changes, our recommendations were summarily dismissed by Council.

In another policy arena, the PAB's recommendations for caution in approving the installation of surveillance cameras—specifically those provided by the Flock surveillance system—also have been ignored. The PAB has pointed out that, as reported in multiple media outlets, data from the Flock system has been leaked to ICE. City leaders have largely discounted the PAB's feedback on a wide assortment of other matters, too.

The PAB should be viewed as a powerful resource that can provide deeply researched policy recommendations that prioritize both public safety concerns and Berkeley's progressive values. It can be an ally in the construction of evidence-based, effective, and just policy.

Beyond the policy arena, we have been significantly frustrated by the City's failure to complete the "meet and confer" process for the PAB's permanent regulations. A comprehensive draft of those regulations was developed by a PAB Subcommittee in consultation with a representative of the Police Department and approved unanimously by the full PAB in April of 2023 – nearly *three* years ago. The current protracted process has required us, as the PAB representatives, to spend countless hours in preliminary negotiations with a large group of "internal stakeholders," including the Police Chief and representatives of the Offices of the City Manager, Human Resources and City Attorney, to obtain *their* approval of *our* regulations before bargaining with the union.

During an inefficient years-long process, we have had to compromise with this internal stakeholders group on a variety of provisions in order to move forward. We were not, however, willing to abandon two essential, common-sense regulations intended to enhance public trust in how allegations of police misconduct are resolved. In December, the internal

stakeholders group appeared before the City Council in closed session for Council to resolve the dispute between us as PAB representatives on one hand, and the Police Chief, Deputy City Manager, and Director of HR on the other. We were greatly disappointed, although not surprised, when Council overwhelmingly sided with the Chief and other internal stakeholders. We are not currently permitted to speak to the press or in a PAB open session about the specific regulatory provisions in question.

Finally, although the PAB carefully considers allegations of misconduct against police officers and often finds that no misconduct occurred, the Chief and City Manager have routinely reversed our decisions when we have sustained the allegations based on our thorough factual and legal analyses.

We know that the PAB is only an advisory body. If our findings and policy recommendations have not always been accepted, that is understandable. What is unacceptable is the consistent pattern of reversals, the delays in providing information critical to doing our job, and the ongoing rollbacks of policies previously agreed to after extensive research and collaboration.

For more than half a century, Berkeley was a model for other cities seeking meaningful police oversight. No more. Over 84% of Berkeley voters established and empowered the Police Accountability Board, but their will has been ignored and the advances they envisioned have often been subverted.

Because we believe our continued efforts to fulfill the mission of the PAB will be in vain, we regrettably must resign. We do not come to this decision lightly. We have enormous respect for our PAB colleagues. We applaud their dedication and expertise and will miss them deeply. It has been an honor to work with them and former colleagues on important issues over the years, and we are grateful to have had the opportunity to be of service to our community.