

The decision of the NYS Court of Appeals regarding police discipline in the matter of Rochester Police Locust Club, Inc V. City of Rochester, et al, is not about failure to reform policing in this city or across the country. This matter was about fairness, due process rights, and rendering a decision of a union worker under an allegation through an unbiased review of the facts.

For far too long unfair disciplinary findings of police officers have been determined by everything but a thorough and impartial evaluation of all relevant information, including the specific alleged actions, consistency with training and policies, and the overall context of the situation.

A fair process will not shield a police officer from facing the correct level of discipline or termination. It will prevent the undue influence from political, social, or media pressure being directed unfairly at an individual police officer.

A fair unbiased process will only improve a long and honorable profession that has consistently overall served with respect, integrity, and dignity throughout the history of this country. This approach will contribute to fostering trust and accountability within law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve if given the chance.

Here in Rochester the formation of the Police Accountability board (PAB) was not about providing true oversight for the betterment of the city. The concept of oversight is about taking a broad view over something, for the purpose of improvement. Oversight is composed of "over", and "sight", meaning looking but not touching.

Instead, the PAB was all about going after "allegedly" bad cops, with no concern on providing protection for good cops doing their jobs to the best of their abilities, which means with the tools and resources that they were or were not given.

The decision is not a win for just police officers, it is about ensuring that every governmental procedure that is undertaken in this democratic state is conducted with fairness, equality, and due process.