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Chairman Miller and members of the House Committee on Local Government,

We write to express our opposition to House Bill 309. We appreciate many of the proposals in HB 309, namely around the Civilian Review Board and the increased oversight of the Fraternal Order of Police contract. However, we remain concerned the bill serves as a vehicle for a provision to change the political nature of the mayoral election in the largest city in the state.

The ACLU of Kentucky is a non-partisan organization and does not have a position as to whether the election of Louisville's mayor should be partisan or non-partisan – clearly there could be advantages to either. We do have a clearly established position of respecting those who are doing the work – the Louisvillians, especially the Black Louisvillians who have experienced police violence firsthand, who have led marches, who have bailed out friends, who have buried loved ones and who have experienced unnecessary use of force in response to peaceful protest. These Louisvillians deserve policies that provide accountability to all public officials who act outside the law or engage in misconduct. These Louisvillians should be entitled to such policies and they should not be delivered in a political trojan horse. The ACLU of Kentucky is not advocating for or against a partisan or non-partisan mayoral race, but Louisvillians should have the option to consider this change at the ballot. If the general assembly sees fit to make such a change, we will certainly encourage them to engage Louisvillians on the decision; however, it doesn't belong in this bill.

Further, the Civilian Review Board (CRB) should have the authority to issue subpoenas and compel witness testimony without the burden of going through the Louisville Metro Government Audit and Oversight Committee. When there is an unjust use of force, as with Breonna Taylor's murder, the CRB must act very quickly. Forcing them to go through an additional bureaucratic process will result in unnecessary delays.

We urge you to vote NO or seriously amend HB 309.

With appreciation,

Kate Miller  
Advocacy Director