



# Metropolitan Alliance of Police

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## Letter to the Editor

In an effort to provide the readers of your paper some perspective, the Metropolitan Alliance of Police, the union that represents the Metra Officers, would like to reassure them that each and every member of the Metra Police Department are state certified, qualified, skilled and dedicated police professionals. In fact Metra only hires officers who are already state certified and fully trained by other police departments in the Chicago area. Surveys conducted by Metra show the daily riders of Metra feel very safe and secure during the daily commute on the various Metra lines.

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The members of the Police Department actually agree with many of the issues that were cited in the Hillard Heintze report. Not surprisingly, the report identified areas that the Union has also identified and attempted to address with Metra Management through Metra's chain-of-command as well as letters written directly to the CEO and Board of Directors. Routinely these efforts met with little or no response and were brought up month after month during labor management meetings. Metra police officers have requested training and equipment to bring them equal with their Chicago area counterparts. Simple equipment additions such as pepper foam and Tasers were routinely denied by Metra management. Even during preparation for the Chicago NATO Summit, these equipment/training issues were identified and again denied by Metra management.

### CHIEF COUNSEL

Joseph Mazzone

The training issues identified by the Hillard Heintze report began when Metra appointed a civilian with no law enforcement experience as management oversight for the police department. The Metra Chief of Police was also forced to report directly to the civilian manager, who consistently denied equipment/training request generally based on monetary and budget savings.

### CO-COUNSEL

Richard Reimer  
Steven Calcaterra

Since the Hillard Heintze report, Metra has eliminated the civilian oversight position and our officers have begun to receive routine training in the area of firearms, pepper foam, and other police related matters. There is still room for improvement, but we believe the report will rectify many of the issues that have forced our officers to routinely work under potentially dangerous working conditions.

### GENERAL COUNSEL

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In conclusion, we feel that many of the news reports have unfairly criticized the professionalism police officers as the problem with the Metra Police Department. It is plain to see that the officers have themselves identified management problems and attempted to rectify them through normal channels in a mass transit agency. The Metra officers welcome the additional training being provided, but also would like a say in the training they receive. The officers themselves are an untapped source of knowledge and experience that they feel would benefit the officers as well as the daily commuters.

### CHAPLAIN

Deacon Thomas Ross

The Metropolitan Alliance of Police, which represents numerous police departments in the Chicagoland area, has offered to assist Metra and the Hillard Heintze team with input, but have not yet been offered a seat at the table.

Keith R. George  
Vice president

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