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HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT CHIEF TROY FINNER SHOULD RESIGN

HOUSTON, February 28, 2024 – *The following is a statement of Mr. Hai Bui, founder of We The People Organize:*

“HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM!

“WHO'S RUNNING THE HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT?

“Who created and approved a Code that allowed officers not to investigate crime?

“Questions are mounting regarding the mishandling of 264,000 suspended cases, including sexual assault and felony cases using the Code “Lack of Personnel” within the Houston Police Department (HPD), since 2016. The spotlight falls on the existence and approval of the practice of using the Code that purportedly exempted officers from their duty to investigate crimes in several divisions.

“Chief Troy Finner has repeatedly stated he never signed off on the practice of using the Code “Lack of Personnel” to suspend investigation of cases and that he ordered officers in special victims division to stop using the Code years ago. Yet it appears Chief Finner failed to issue a Department Circular **prohibiting** such a Code that should have been distributed throughout the department in every division. The absence of an official Department Circular to formally **abolish** the Code raises concerns. The lack of such communication throughout every division of HPD suggests a lack of leadership and incompetence that have brought embarrassment and disgrace on the department that potentially will cause low morale within the department.

“Why didn't Chief Finner bring these issues to the attention of the Mayor and City Council to seek additional staffing to investigate these cases in 2016?

“Chief Finner initially stated that HPD was reviewing more than 4,000 cases that were suspended using the code, now, according to news reports 2,000 to 264,000 were suspended under Finner using the Code.

“This issue goes beyond internal policy; it is a matter of public safety that potentially left victims vulnerable to their aggressors. It raises significant questions:

- What has happened to the commitment to protect and serve Houstonians?

- Where is the integrity and transparency that the community expects?
- What happened to the millions of dollars in federal grants HPD received to hire officers within the last 5-10 years?
- Have these grants money been quietly reallocated without public knowledge?

"This situation should not be dismissed as a mere oversight. It points to a deeper problem of poor leadership, incompetence, laziness, dereliction of duty, recklessness, dangerous, and a total disregard for the safety and well-being for the sexual assault victims and other crime victims.

"We the People Organize are calling for an outside independent Investigation and Oversight of the Houston Police Department misconduct. We are requesting an audit on how the millions of dollars in federal grants HPD received to hire officers was spent within the last 5-10 years, including \$10 million Sep 2010, \$6 million Nov 2021, \$6.25 million Nov 2023, \$3.125 million Oct 2014, \$4.9 million Sep 2011 and an additional \$9.9 million Dec 2011, and \$6.2 million Nov 2020, Covid 19 funds to expand HPD domestic abuse teams, but not limited to.

"The mishandling of victims' cases has tarnished HPD's reputation, eroding the trust and confidence of the public and dedicated officers, especially patrol officers place in their leader.

"It is our firm belief that Chief Finner must step down from his role as Chief of the Houston Police Department. Such a change is crucial for HPD to begin the essential process of rebuilding trust with the citizens of Houston and to build morale with officers in the police department.