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ACLU of Iowa Announces Support for Iowa City Police Citizen Review Board Ballot Measure - 10/18/2007

by R. Ben Stone, Executive Director
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DES MOINES - The American Civil Liberties Union of Iowa announced today that it has endorsed a yes vote on the Police Citizens Review Board amendment to Iowa City's Home Rule Charter which will be on the November 6, 2007 ballot as Measure "D".

"For decades, the ACLU both nationally and here in Iowa have advocated for more effective and accountable law enforcement," said Ben Stone, Executive Director of the ACLU-IA. "The statewide ACLU supports Measure D because its passage in Iowa City could help create momentum for needed reform across the state," he said.

If passed, the amendment will create a permanent Police Citizens Review Board with power to subpoena witnesses during investigations of alleged police misconduct; hold at least one public meeting annually for the purpose of soliciting citizens' views on the policies, practices, and procedures of the Iowa City Police Department; and make recommendations to the City Council regarding those policies and practices.

The Iowa ACLU supports Measure D on the basis of the ACLU's history of working to protect the Bill of Rights, including the First Amendment (freedom of speech, freedom to petition the government for redress of grievances), the Fourth Amendment (the right of citizens to be secure from unwarranted government intrusion), and various rights related to Due Process and the rights of the accused.

"We are pleased with the ACLU endorsement," said Carol deProse and Caroline Dieterle, Chairpersons of the Better Police Citizens Review Board Committee which is advocating a 'YES' vote. "We hope citizens will support the need for accountability in city government, especially when it comes to police activities."

The ACLU is a non-partisan, not-for-profit organization that strives to ensure that the liberties granted by the Bill of Rights are given to everyone regardless of political affiliation. It has internal rules that forbid endorsements of candidates for elected or appointed office, but does on occasion endorse ballot measures it believes protect or support civil liberties.

The proposed amendment was first brought by a citizen's petition in 2001. The City of Iowa City rejected the petition and was challenged in court on the rejection. Earlier this year the Iowa Supreme Court ordered the City to place the question on the ballot.

For additional information voters can go to the Better PCRB committee's web site at:

<http://www.betterPCRB.com>