

VOTE TO STOP ~~COP CITY~~

Vote to Stop Cop City Coalition

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ICYMI: Cop City Vote Coalition Submits Over 116,000 Signatures to City Hall, Takes Legal Action to Compel Verification

Atlanta, GA — After a summer of petition-gathering, the Vote to Stop Cop City Coalition gathered at Atlanta City Hall to turn in petition signatures in favor of putting Cop City to a public vote. In total, the coalition collected over 116,000 signatures — over double the legal requirement according to the City of 58,232.

“What we are presenting is a clear mandate for the City Council to put Cop City on the ballot,” **said Coalition Leader Mary Hooks**. “From every corner of Atlanta, the people have chosen, and the people demand a voice. It’s time to let Atlanta decide, and it’s time for the City Council to respect the process, the will of the voters, and put this to a public vote.”

However, minutes after volunteers and organizers submitted over 116,000 signatures to the City Clerk in support of a referendum on Cop City, outside counsel for Mayor Dickens and the City of Atlanta released an opinion memo recommending that the City refuse to start the verification process, citing the preliminary stay issued by the 11th Circuit nearly 2 weeks prior. [The city’s memo can be found here](#).

Coalition General Counsel Kurt Kastorf, along with Hooks and other coalition leaders, held a [press conference](#) immediately afterwards, announcing [legal action in the Northern District of Georgia Federal Court](#) to direct the City of Atlanta to begin the verification process.

In total, the coalition collected more signatures than Mayor Dickens and his opponent received combined (78,643) in their 2021 runoff — a statistic that speaks to the intensity of public support for a referendum and the disconnect between Atlanta’s political establishment and their voters.

The historic milestone of petition gathering would not have been possible without the grassroots support of local, statewide and national organizations and individuals including Black Male Initiative, CASA, the Center for Popular Democracy, Community Movement Builders, GLAHR, Movement for Black Lives, SONG Power, SURJ, Working Families Power, and more. The coalition has asked The Carter Center to offer their support as monitors to the City of Atlanta.

“Today is a celebration of what is possible when we join forces and mobilize around our shared issues. For years, the City of Atlanta has ignored community input and repressed democratic participation on the issue of Cop City. Now, thanks to the dedication and resilience of everyday Atlantans, including our members on the ground in organizations like CASA and the New Georgia Project, the people of Atlanta will have an opportunity to decide the fate of Cop City for themselves,” **said Analilia Mejia and DaMareo Cooper, Co-Executive Directors of the Center for Popular Democracy.** “Atlantans have made their view clear: We can’t afford to keep investing in a broken system that continues to leave our communities broken, terrorized, and in poverty. It’s time to invest in a new vision of true public safety, one that invests in all of us.”

“Atlanta voters have spoken,” **said Britney Whaley, Regional Director of Working Families Power.** “The mayor and city council tried to overstep citizens and silence them, but the people are making sure their voices are heard. More people have signed this petition than have voted for any candidate in the last mayoral election. That is unprecedented.”

“It is our deepest belief that the more open, transparent and collaborative the process-the better the overall outcomes will be. We are clear that the Cop City process was not that,” **said John Taylor, Black Male Initiative GA.** “Black Male Initiative is in this fight to make sure we ‘Let Atlanta Decide’, because we are dedicated to ‘re-imagining a truly healthy, safe & prosperous Atlanta for all of our communities!’”

"Black and Latino communities know we should have a say on how taxpayer money is used when projects as big as this one come to the city. CASA members want to see these millions of dollars not earmarked for Cop City but instead invested in providing affordable housing. Right now working class people can barely afford to live in the city. Affordable rents can transform lives, whereas a highly militarized police force can destroy them,” **said Luis Zaldivar, CASA’s Georgia Director.**

“Our staff and volunteers have worked tirelessly over the summer, and we thank them for all their hard work,” **said Kate Shapiro of SONG Power.** “It is vital that Atlanta voters have a say about Cop City, and now they will. Our coalition has done something the mayor and city council refused to do.”

“Disabled people in Atlanta and across this region have long been neglected and ignored by those in power. The city of Atlanta is one of the most inaccessible cities in this country, and despite pleas for investment in improving our lives, Atlanta's leaders chose to spend tens of millions of dollars on Cop City. Disabled people deserve access and care from our elected leaders, deserve to live without fear of state violence, and deserve to have an equal voice in our democracy, and for those reasons and more, New Disabled South Rising has been proud to serve as a fiscal sponsor for the referendum campaign. Our mission is to help build a truly representative democracy in the South, and despite attempts by those in power to suppress the

community's voices, what this coalition achieved is a shining example of that democracy in action. We now call on the city of Atlanta and the state of Georgia to put the future of Cop City on the ballot and let the people decide,” **added Dom Kelly, CEO New Disabled South Rising**

“The Cop City referendum push is about letting the residents of Atlanta have a say on a massive facility that will directly impact their lives and will be paid for with their tax dollars,” **added James Mays, New Georgia Project Action Fund Deputy Field Director.** “Over 116,000 Atlanta residents have made it clear that city officials can no longer override the will of the people who put them in office. While rent continues to rise, hospitals continue to close, and our roads continue to deteriorate, is spending more than \$90 million on a facility that may do more harm than good really what Atlantans need?”

“This historic campaign has shown in Atlanta what we know to be true in so many communities across the country – that we want to determine what community safety looks like for ourselves. The people of Atlanta overwhelmingly demand a seat at the table of democracy. We will continue to support these communities so that residents can determine the future of policing and community safety in Atlanta,” **added Tim Franzen, American Friends Service Committee**

"We are the experts when it comes to our own lives, shared experiences, and the needs of our communities. We know what will keep us safe, it is NOT the police (trained or incompetent) . We keep us safe and have an abundance of the imagination needed to dream up and create alternatives to over-policing that will ACTUALLY keep our people alive, off the street and away from police,” **said Toni-Michelle Williams, SNAP Co. Executive Director**

“GLAHR Action Network stands in opposition to Cop City. We stand on the call to action for direct democracy, one that truly represents the will of the people. The success of this campaign belongs to the community. We are the people! Stop Cop City!” said **GLAHR Action Network Executive Director, Adelina Nicholls**

"The Stop Cop City movement has shown that Atlanta residents are tired of the status quo that puts corporations and the wealthiest first while ignoring the needs of working people. We've made it clear that Atlanta does not want Cop City, and we will keep fighting to create a better city that invests in community not cops,” **added Gabriel Sanchez, Atlanta Democratic Socialists of America**

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