

# NOPD Signs Agreement With Independent Monitor



Susan Hutson Photo: Creative Commons/Bart Everson

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New Orleans police chief Ronal Serpas signed a landmark agreement this morning with a new independent police monitor who will be in charge of keeping the troubled police force in check as it moves forward on a [set of internal overhauls](#) to remake itself.

Police monitor Susan Hutson arrived in New Orleans this summer with a mandate to hold the police department accountable. Hutson will be responsible for calling out misbehaving cops and monitoring internal policies and policing practices from her post in the Inspector General's Office. Her position was overwhelmingly approved by voters after it was added to the city charter.

The agreement between Hutson and Serpas, himself a new appointee, will allow the police monitor's office access to police files. She will be able to check in on police performance—if some police officers tend to ticket much more than others, or tend to stop people of color or young men or women more than others, for example—and audit internal investigations of police misconduct. Hutson may

issue public reports and make policy recommendations with her findings, but won't have the power to conduct her own investigations.

"We exist so that there is someone besides just those in the department looking at the investigations and looking at all of the functions," Hutson told the [New Orleans Tribune](#) in an interview earlier this year. "I shall be straightforward; I want complete investigations."

The [Times-Picayune](#) reports that only two other cities, Seattle and Nashville, have a civilian in charge of their city police public integrity bureaus.

New Orleans has high hopes for Hutson. The [Times-Picayune](#) reports that many victims of New Orleans' police brutality and legendary corruption were at the signing today to welcome Hutson.

"We have had waves of reform before and right now we are in the midst of one," said civil rights attorney Mary Howell, the [paper reported](#). "It's a time to be encouraged and optimistic."