

Calls for City Hall reform grow louder after third council member arrested this year

by Walter Smith-Randolph, WKRC Friday, November 20th 2020

CINCINNATI (WKRC) - In the 1920s, Cincinnati City Hall was full of corruption. A new charter was passed in 1924, which led Cincinnati to the government it now has.

With three City Council members facing corruption charges in one year, many are saying it's time to revisit the charter and clean house.

"Any time you hear about money getting in the way of the right thing happening, it's just a terrible thing," said Bill Frost, a member of the board of Cincinnati's Charter Committee who is also running for council.

Frost says it's time for Cincinnati to get back to its roots.

"The Charter Committee are pushing really hard to change the way we run the city back to a 'Hey, let's think about Cincinnati and the way we do things. Let's get more neighborhood-centric,'" said Frost.

Frost says the committee believes in more transparency, accountability and fiscal responsibility, but they're not the only ones.

The chair of the Hamilton County GOP says Cincinnati has been brought to its knees and has become a national laughingstock. In a statement, Alex Triantafilou says more Republicans are interested in jumping into the race for mayor and council. He also says the GOP will work with the Charter Committee or any non-partisan group interested in good government.

While Republican Triantafillou and Democrat Mayor John Cranley have called for Sittenfeld to step down, it doesn't appear he will. Sittenfeld is also getting back up from Council Member Chris Seelbach, who says the charges are weak.

Frost says due process is needed, but both he and the mayor say City Hall needs a culture change.

"It's upsetting. I've gotten loads of feedback in the last 24 hours from people saying they want a change," said Frost.

"We need good people in public office. If you're listening to this and as angry as I am, think about running for City Council, think about cleaning up the mess," said Cranley.

Hamilton County Prosecutor Joe Deters will not seek to remove Sittenfeld from office. Local 12 reached out to Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost's office but did not hear back.

=====