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A coalition held a press conference Friday at City Hall concerning issues related to a recent Tasing.

Religious leaders speak out on Tasing

Police discipline questioned

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DOWNTOWN – Two dozen mostly religious leaders stood together on the steps of City Hall on Friday to denounce the use of force and an arbitration process that more often than not sides with police officers being disciplined.

The leaders called for unity in the community and said they hoped for a quick resolution in the case of a police officer – previously fired for the use of excessive force then rehired – who shocked Celeste Thomas on Aug. 23 with a Taser. Thomas, the 26-year-old daughter of City Councilman and former Police Officer Cecil Thomas, was on her knees with her hands in the air when Cincinnati police Officer Anthony Plummer shocked her.

Celeste Thomas was charged with obstruction of justice and possession of an open flask when the car she was a passenger in was pulled over on West McMillan Street nearly two weeks ago.

Plummer has been suspended with pay and Police Chief Tom Streicher told The Enquirer at the time that it was not out of the question that Plummer could lose his job.

Plummer had been fired in August 2006 after he violated police procedure and used his Taser. He got his job back in September 2007 after his case went to arbitration.

“We want transparency and integrity with the arbitrators,” said Bishop E. Lynn Brown, the regional bishop for the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

Celeste Thomas’ lawyer, Carl Lewis, is hoping the city drops the charges against his client. He would not say if he was going to be filing a civil lawsuit against the city and the police department.

Lewis said Thomas is suffering emotionally.

“This has been very very traumatic experience for her,” Lewis said.

Members of the group vowed to follow the process all the way to the end.