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UNDERSERVED, AGRICULTURAL, AND RURAL
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
CONTRACTING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1802

September 10, 2021

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U. S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Garland,

I write today to request a pattern-or-practice investigation of the Louisiana State Police (“LSP”). The department has displayed consistent and blatant disregard for the rule of law and accountability practices regarding excessive use of force by police.

On May 10, 2019, LSP engaged in a high-speed chase with Ronald Greene. Once Mr. Greene stopped, he raised his hands, apologized to State Trooper Dakota Moss and Master Trooper Chris Hollingsworth, and within seconds was shot with a stun gun.¹ If that were the end of the incident, the public likely would have never heard of it. That was not the end of it, however, and despite LSP’s cover-up attempts, the truth has finally come to light.

Unarmed, Mr. Greene exited his vehicle, was thrown to the ground and placed in a chokehold. Hollingsworth then punched Mr. Greene in the face multiple times while he exclaimed that he was sorry and scared. By this time more state troopers arrived, and Mr. Greene was shackled by the hands and feet and Trooper Kory York dragged Mr. Greene face down on the ground. Mr. Greene was left lying face down on the ground bleeding from the head while troopers made jokes and called Mr. Greene a “stupid motherf***er”.² At this time, LSP sprang into action, not to save Mr. Greene’s life, but to save their own skins. Mr. Greene was pronounced dead on arrival at the hospital. It’s clear that LSP officers began a coordinated effort to ensure no one ever heard of Ronald Greene.

LSP’s efforts were successful for over two years. During that time, LSP stuck to the story that Mr. Greene had died as a result of injuries sustained in a car crash. No LSP personnel were disciplined, and the trooper’s body camera footage was suppressed. Over two years passed before Mr. Greene’s body camera footage and records were released, demonstrating the lengths LSP went to cover up the facts and circumstances of Mr. Greene’s death. Despite LSP’s best efforts, we now know the name Ronald Greene.

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/08/25/us/louisiana-body-camera-police-beating/index.html>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ronald-greene-arrest-death-bodycam-video-released/>

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As Mr. Greene's tragic death entered the public conscience, the LSP assured the public that this was an isolated incident. However, the evidence says otherwise. This was undoubtedly not an isolated incident. LSP has historically and systematically directed unnecessarily violent, targeted attacks, especially upon Black and brown individuals.³ LSP's database is filled with names they wish the world would never know.

Yesterday, the Associated Press (AP) reported that LSP routinely refuses to release body camera footage, identifying at least a dozen cases in the last decade where senior LSP members ignored or concealed evidence of beatings, denied accountability, and impeded efforts to root out misconduct.⁴ It has also come to my attention that the review board set up by LSP to evaluate past cases of misconduct was quietly shut down without completing its work.

Regardless of statements at a press conference today, it is clear that the LSP will not clean up its own house, and I have no faith they are capable of policing themselves. Had it not been for the work of investigative journalists, we may never have heard of Ronald Greene. My heart breaks for the Greene family and the countless other individuals whose fate was sealed and concealed by LSP, and whose names we still do not know.

While there are media reports that a federal investigation into these circumstances is underway, more must be done.⁵⁶ "Driving while Black" should not be a risk factor for violence from the Louisiana State Police. I call on the Department of Justice to conduct a full and expedited pattern-or-practice investigation of LSP. Only with an in-depth investigation can we ensure transparency and accountability within the Louisiana State Police Department, despite their sworn oaths to protect and serve.

Currently, I am requesting a meeting with Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta and Assistant Attorney General Kristen Clarke to discuss the widespread problems within LSP and ways in which the Department of Justice can be a partner in finding a solution.

I am committed to working with the department to ensure that every law enforcement agency in the country follows our laws and protects the civil rights of the people. We can start with Louisiana.

Sincerely,



Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress

³ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/sep/09/louisiana-state-police-videos-pattern-of-violence>

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/police-beatings-louisiana-video-91168d2848b10df739d73cc35b0c02f8>

⁵ https://www.nola.com/news/crime-police/article_cd1c6d2a-d458-11eb-a16f-4b1fc19b85c6.html

⁶ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton-rouge/news/politics/legislature/article_81c811dc-de86-11eb-bb9f-1372cf33907f.html