

John W. Vaudreuil
United States Attorney

Western District of Wisconsin

July 25, 2016

Dear Mr. Vaudreuil

We, citizens of Madison, Wisconsin are concerned about the current state of our police department and its patterns and practices as they relate to the Civil Rights of the citizens of this city, according to Title 42 U.S. Code Section 14141. Statistics show that the Madison Police Department has a higher per capita rate of officer involved shootings than New York City, which is a substantially larger city, has an arrest disparity ratio between black and white citizens that is the highest in the nation at 11 to 1 and has a juvenile arrest rate disparity of 16 to 1.

Over the past two years, we have witnessed the killing of two unarmed citizens, one black and one white. Evidence suggests that these individuals were having mental health crises when the police responded. In response, the police chose to use deadly force as opposed to a mental health crises intervention approach or suitable de-escalation tactics, thereby establishing these as acceptable practices to be used by Madison police officers.

The Madison Police Chief has also defended the actions of officers who were caught on video brutalizing a 110 lb 18-year old Black girl (Genele Laird). This was a textbook case of excessive use of force, but the Chief of Police says that their behavior was standard practice. We believe that the Madison Police Department has established a set of standards and practices that are detrimental to the health of African American citizens and other citizens of color.

MPD officer Matt Kenny, who killed one of these people, 19 year old Tony Robinson, is now not only back on duty, but was sent to the same community center where Tony's sister goes to provide "community outreach". Matt Kenny, who was trained by our current Police Chief Mike Koval, also currently trains officers. This action suggests, if not an utter tone-deafness to the qualities that instill trust in police, an actual malevolent intent to cause further harm to the family of Tony Robinson who have been very outspoken against the MPD since Tony was killed.

The Madison Police Chief has also broken his own departmental code of conduct in his written blog, lashing out and leveling threats against the Madison Common Council. He did this in response to a proposed RFP to hire a consultant to help review the Madison Police Department. Within a week, at a Madison Common Council meeting, he again broke his own code of conduct by showing threatening, aggressive, dismissive, and insulting behavior towards not only the Common Council, but also members of the community including Tony Robinson's grandmother, calling her "a raging lunatic". The Madison police has established a practice of publicly instilling fear in its citizens.

The Madison Police Department also disproportionately targets areas that are known for Madison's Black citizens to congregate, such as bus transfer points, malls, and specific neighborhoods.

Through all of this, our Police Chief has claimed that nothing is wrong with the Madison Police Department and that this department that holds an 11 to 1 arrest ratio of Black to White people and is also under investigation by the ACLU for working with landlords to evict tenants, is not only a model police department, but **the** model police department.

Not only have we witnessed these most recent incidents, the 2013 Race to Equity report outlines in detail most recent patterns and practices.

<http://racetoequity.net/dev/wp-content/uploads/WCCF-R2E-Report.pdf> A study in 2008 commissioned by the Urban League of Greater Madison, The State of Black Madison 2008: Before the Tipping Point, http://www.ulgm.org/media/State_of_Black_Madison_2008_web.pdf showed massive disparities in treatment of Madison's Black and White citizens. And in a 2002 Wisconsin State Journal article by Pam Oliver, she showed that arrest disparities were at 10 to 1 vs Black and White citizens. <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~oliver/racial-disparities/> This tells us that the disparities have been on going, and are not a recent development. This tells us that these practices have produced long running systemic disparities.

These are just some of the most visible examples of the biased, brutal, and unjust practices that this police department has deployed against the citizens it claims to serve. We believe that a thorough investigation will disclose even more abuse. It will show that policing practices used on people of color and people of limited means such as the homeless, are harsh and disparate. It will show that the Madison Police Department has chosen to use excessive force opposed to de-escalation tactics when incidents occur.

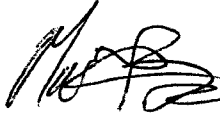
As concerned citizens, we are asking that the United States Department of Justice to launch an investigation into the Madison Police Department's patterns and practices for civil rights infractions.

Handwritten signatures and names:

Lisa Peyton-Caire
Arlene A. Gaines
Gloria J. Ladson-Billings
Gregory C. Jones
Amelia Royko Maurer
Corinda Rainey-Moore
Kaleem Caire
Eric S. Upchurch
Brenda Brown
Brandi Grayson

Handwritten signatures:

Josia Peyton-Caire
Gloria J. Ladson-Billings
Gregory C. Jones
Corinda Rainey-Moore
Kaleem Caire
Eric S. Upchurch
Brenda Brown
Annette Miller
Ther. 2. Arthur
Robert L. Anthony Jr.



Nathan Braverman

Marianne N. Bloch

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