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January 24, 2025

The Honorable James McHenry
Acting Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW,
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Acting Attorney General McHenry,

I am deeply concerned by reports that the Department of Justice (DOJ) may seek to reconsider settlements and consent decrees negotiated by the Biden administration and agreed to by all parties involved. This policy change is shortsighted and dangerous, and it could make my hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, less safe. There is consensus in our community that the reforms included in the settlement are appropriate and necessary, and Louisville Metro Government and Louisville Metro Police Department (LMPD) accept the consent decree. I implore DOJ not to interfere in the process of finalizing Louisville's consent decree.

In March 2023, following nearly two years of investigation of LMPD, DOJ announced what Louisvillians already long knew: LMPD routinely and as a matter of practice deprives individuals of rights guaranteed them by the United States Constitution. Individual incidents documented in the report are horrifying. LMPD killed Breonna Taylor, an unarmed, 26-year-old Black woman, in her own home using an illegally obtained no-knock warrant. Officers videotaped themselves throwing slushies at Black pedestrians. This same department concealed at least 738,000 records documenting LMPD officers' sexual abuse, rape, and molestation of boys participating in a program for young people interested in law enforcement.

DOJ's investigation and report highlight the litany of civil rights abuses and establish the pattern of illegal policing that makes enforceable, structural reforms imperative. The Justice Department found that LMPD officers routinely escalated encounters with the public and used unreasonable, often deadly, force against people who posed little or no threat. Inappropriate use of force was widespread, varied, and disproportionate; officers used dangerous chokeholds, tasers, and dogs in situations that did not warrant them. DOJ's investigation found that LMPD routinely filed search warrants that did not demonstrate probable cause and that police executed far more no-knock warrants than they applied for, regularly failing to announce their presence when executing warrants. The no-knock warrant that resulted in the killing of Breonna Taylor was intentionally filed with false, incomplete, and misleading information.

DOJ found that LMPD selectively and aggressively polices Black people, and it polices Black people differently than it polices white people. LMPD officers are significantly more likely to unjustifiably stop, ticket, and search Black drivers than white drivers, and officers disproportionately pull drivers over in Black neighborhoods and conduct illegal searches and seizures on Black pedestrians. Officers called Black people "monkeys" and "animals," and they treated individuals with mental disabilities with utter contempt.

Our community has spent almost four years having difficult conversations and doing the hard work to reach an agreement that will take our city forward and help restore the public's trust in its police department. Louisville Metro Government and LMPD leadership agree this negotiated consent decree is necessary and appropriate. It will not make our city or our police safer to abandon this process now.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Morgan McGarvey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress