



**U.S. Department of Justice**

Civil Rights Division

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*Office of the Assistant Attorney General*

*Washington, D.C. 20530*

August 10, 2016

The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor  
City of Baltimore  
Baltimore City Hall, 100 Holliday Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Investigation of the Baltimore Police Department

Dear Mayor Rawlings-Blake:

The United States Department of Justice has completed its civil pattern or practice investigation into the Baltimore Police Department ("BPD") pursuant to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 14141. The enclosed Report sets forth the findings of our investigation. We have reasonable cause to believe that BPD engages in a pattern or practice of conduct that violates the Constitution and federal laws, including: making stops, searches, and arrests without the required justification; using enforcement strategies that subject the City's African-American residents to disproportionate rates of stops, searches, and arrests; using excessive force; and retaliating against individuals for their constitutionally-protected expression. The pattern or practice results from systemic deficiencies that have persisted within BPD for many years.

We opened our investigation in May 2015 after reviewing information about BPD's police practices and receiving specific requests from you, members of Congress, and other members of the Baltimore community. Throughout our investigation, we have been assisted by the full cooperation of City officials, BPD leadership, and officers throughout the Department's chain of command. We are grateful for their willingness to share valuable insights into the challenges facing the Department through meetings and interviews, numerous ride-alongs with BPD officers, and by providing access to BPD's own records and data.

We found widespread agreement within the City, Police Department, and broader community that BPD needs reform to ensure that officers have the tools they need to police effectively and restore community trust in law enforcement. We also found a widespread desire for reform. Throughout our investigation, BPD leadership has been receptive to our preliminary feedback and technical assistance, and while our investigation was still ongoing, BPD began implementing reforms. Department leadership has worked proactively to update its policies, institute new trainings, and respond to other issues we have identified. The proactive, solutions-

focused approach of City and BPD leadership is reflected in the Agreement in Principle reached between the City and the Justice Department. That Agreement identifies categories of reforms that the City and Justice Department agree must be taken to remedy the violations of the Constitution and federal law identified in our Report. The Agreement further provides that the City and Justice Department will seek input from all communities in Baltimore that will be used to craft a comprehensive, court-enforceable consent decree that establishes a path to lasting reform.

We fully expect to continue to work collaboratively with the City and BPD to address the issues raised in our findings and institute necessary reforms that will strengthen community trust in BPD. These efforts will not only increase the effectiveness of BPD's law enforcement efforts, it will advance officer and public safety in a manner that serves the entire Baltimore community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vanita", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vanita A. Gupta  
Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Rights Division

cc: Commissioner Kevin Davis  
Baltimore Police Department

George Nilson  
Solicitor, City of Baltimore

Jamie Gorelick  
Partner, WilmerHale