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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT REACHES AGREEMENT TO RESOLVE
POLICE MISCONDUCT CASE AGAINST COLUMBUS POLICE
DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of Justice today announced that it has reached agreement with the city of Columbus, Ohio to resolve its police misconduct lawsuit against the Columbus Division of Police (CDP).

Under the agreement, the United States will review CDP training classes, the documentation of alleged misconduct and internal investigations. Today's agreement allows the Department to review CDP procedures through December 2003. If the Justice Department determines that a pattern or practice of misconduct exists, it has the authority to re-file the lawsuit.

"We are pleased that a resolution of this matter has finally been reached," said Assistant Attorney General Ralph F. Boyd, Jr. "We believe this agreement will help protect everyone's constitutional rights without compromising the effectiveness of the CDP in carrying out its critical law enforcement responsibilities."

The October 1999 lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio, alleged that the CDP engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive force. Since the complaint's filing, the CDP has made significant improvements in its policies, procedures and practices. These reforms include:

§revised "use of force" policies, procedures for reporting and investigating allegations of misconduct, and training to ensure that the conduct of CDP officers meets constitutional standards;

§changes to handle police misconduct complaints, including the expansion of the CDP's Internal Affairs Bureau;

§procedures that ensure comprehensive investigations into citizen complaints of police brutality and other serious misconduct; and

§policies to address allegations of racial discriminatory policing.

If implemented properly, these reforms should remedy the pattern or practice of misconduct. The agreement provides mechanisms to ensure that reforms are implemented.

Under the 1994 Crime Bill, the Justice Department has the authority to conduct investigations and file civil suits against law enforcement agencies that engage in a pattern or practice of misconduct. The lawsuit against Columbus has been the only time the Justice Department has filed contested litigation.

Today's agreement is the eighth settlement under the 1994 Crime Bill. Other settlements entered during the Bush Administration include the Cincinnati Police Department, the District of Columbia Metropolitan Police Department and the Highland Park, Illinois Police Department. The Justice Department continues to monitor settlements covering the Los Angeles Police Department, the New Jersey State Police, the Steubenville, Ohio Police Department and the Pittsburgh Bureau of Police.

For more information on the Justice Department's enforcement efforts, see www.usdoj.gov/crt/split.