

JUSTICE NEWS

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Justice Department Settles with Warren, Ohio, Police Department

Agreement Resolves Findings of Excessive Force Uncovered During Pattern or Practice Investigation

WASHINGTON – Following a comprehensive investigation, the Justice Department today announced that it has resolved its investigation of the city of Warren, Ohio, Police Department (WPD) through a settlement agreement filed with the U.S. District Court.

The investigation focused on whether WPD engages in unconstitutional or unlawful policing through the use of excessive force. WPD cooperated throughout the investigation. The Justice Department found reasonable cause to believe that WPD engages in a pattern or practice of excessive force in violation of the Fourth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. The Justice Department, WPD and city of Warren officials reached an agreement that, once implemented, will resolve the Justice Department's investigation. To create sustainable reform, the agreement requires WPD to continue to develop and implement:

- new use of force policies and protocols;
- systems to ensure that uses of force are documented and evaluated;
- systems to track citizen complaints and ensure they are investigated promptly; and
- officer training on conducting effective and constitutional policing.

“Effective policing and constitutional policing go hand in hand. Developing and implementing meaningful reforms through this cooperative agreement will assist in reducing crime, upholding the Constitution and ensuring that the community has confidence in the police department's commitment to fair and effective law enforcement,” said Thomas E. Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. “The issues within the Warren Police Department have been present for many years and will take time to fix, but we look forward to continuing our positive partnership with the people of Warren, Mayor Doug Franklin, Police Chief Tim Bowers and his officers to implement sustainable reform.”

“This agreement puts in place a structure in which officers will be trained on appropriate use of force and citizens can register complaints if they feel they've been mistreated,” said Steven M. Dettelbach, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio. “I am confident that the Justice Department and Warren officials will continue to work cooperatively to insure the safety of the officers and people of Warren.”

The Justice Department's investigation involved an in-depth review of WPD documents, as well as extensive community engagement. The department reviewed thousands of pages of documents, including written policies and procedures, training materials and internal reports; data; video footage; and investigative files. Justice Department attorneys and investigators also conducted interviews with WPD officers, supervisors, command staff and city officials, and conducted interviews with community members and local advocates. Throughout the investigation, the Justice Department provided feedback and technical assistance to WPD, and in response, WPD has already begun to implement a number of remedial measures.

This investigation was conducted jointly by the Special Litigation Section of the Civil Rights Division and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Ohio, with the assistance of law enforcement

professionals, including former police chiefs. For more information on the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, please visit www.justice.gov/crt.

If you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to contact us at 1-877-218-5228.

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Civil Rights Division