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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice

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Thursday, March 31, 2011

Justice Department Opens Investigation into the Seattle Police Department

WASHINGTON – The Justice Department announced today that it has opened a pattern or practice investigation into allegations of use of excessive force and discriminatory policing by members of the Seattle Police Department (SPD), pursuant to the pattern or practice provision of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, the anti-discrimination provisions of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Justice Department will seek to determine whether there are systemic violations of the Constitution or federal law by officers of the SPD. During the course of our investigation, the Justice Department will consider all relevant information, particularly the efforts that Seattle has undertaken to ensure compliance with federal law. The Justice Department has taken similar steps in a variety of state and local law enforcement agencies, both large and small, in jurisdictions such as New York, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and California.

Today's announcement is separate from any ongoing federal criminal investigation involving the Seattle Police Department.

This matter is being investigated jointly by attorneys from the Civil Rights Division's Special Litigation Section and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Washington. The Department welcomes any information from the community. If you have any comments or concerns, please feel free to contact us at Community.seattle@usdoj.gov or 855-203-4479.

11-403

Civil Rights Division

Updated September 15, 2014

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