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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Court Approval of the Consent Decree for the Baltimore Police Department

Today, U.S. District Judge James K. Bredar approved the consent decree between the U.S. Department of Justice and Baltimore City officials to remedy allegations of widespread and longstanding unlawful policing practices. In his order, Judge Bredar also denied DOJ’s request to delay approval, noting that the time for negotiating has long since passed, and that the city cannot wait any longer to begin the arduous process of reform. The ruling comes a day after the NAACP LDF requested to intervene in the case to make sure Baltimore residents’ rights are vindicated and their voices are heard. Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., issued the following statement:

“We thank the court for speedily approving an agreement that will help ensure constitutional policing and vindicate the rights of the people of Baltimore. As Judge Bredar noted, Baltimore cannot flourish without effective and lawful policing, and this consent decree represents the first step towards that reality.”

“The hard work is far from over. Change does not happen overnight. But this agreement provides the necessary framework to eradicate widespread and systemic police misconduct through sustainable reform. This consent decree will help radically transform the BPD, improve public safety and build community trust. Today’s approval is a true victory; the result of tremendous activism and exceptional lawyering. This is a great day for a great city, and we will continue to fight for the people of Baltimore to have the police department they deserve.”

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.