



For Immediate Release
Tuesday, November 7, 2017

Contact: David Jacobs
212-965-2255 / djacobs@naacpldf.org

NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Trial Board's Determination Baltimore Officer Caesar Goodson Did Not Violate Department Policies

Today, Baltimore Police Department (BPD) Officer Caesar Goodson was found not guilty of violating 21 department policies at an administrative trial for his role in the in-custody death of Freddie Gray in April 2015. NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) Deputy Director of Policy and Senior Counsel [Monique Dixon](#) issued the following statement in response:

“Freddie Gray was conscious and verbal when officers placed him in Officer Goodson’s van; he was unconscious and had a severed spine when medical personnel took him out. Yet, the administrative trial board found that Officer Goodson did not violate a single departmental policy. It is appalling, yet predictable given the composition of the trial board. As long as the city lets law enforcement police themselves in lieu of meaningful civilian oversight, these proceedings will not result in accountability and will fail to strengthen community trust. That is why last year LDF, in partnership with the Campaign for Justice, Safety and Jobs, [called on](#) the Mayor and Baltimore Police Commissioner to negotiate a police union contract that would allow civilians to serve on departmental hearing boards as permitted by Maryland’s Law Enforcement Officers Bill of Rights. These hearings are hollow unless they are fundamentally altered to incorporate resident input, transparency, and accountability.

“Our thoughts remain with Mr. Gray’s family and friends as they are forced to continually relive the trauma of his death. We will continue our efforts alongside our local partners to advance meaningful reform in Baltimore to remedy the BPD’s pattern and practice of unlawful policing.”

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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.