NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Statement on the Department of Justice’s Decision to Delay Baltimore Consent Decree Hearing and Memo Directing Review of Police Investigations

"This motion to continue the public hearing on the proposed Baltimore consent decree is nothing more than a blatant attempt by the Justice Department to abandon its obligations under federal civil rights law and the U.S. Constitution to ensure that police departments are serving residents in a nondiscriminatory and constitutional manner," said President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill. “Long-serving DOJ attorneys, including some who have served under multiple administrations, conducted a fair and thorough investigation and found countless civil rights violations in Baltimore. Notably, the motion is ‘strongly opposed’ by the Mayor of Baltimore City, which sends a clear message that federal court oversight of the Baltimore Police Department is warranted. We expect the Department to uphold its responsibility to the citizens of Baltimore to ensure their rights are protected.

"In addition, the March 31, 2017 memo from Attorney General Sessions to DOJ bureau heads states that the “misdeeds of individual bad actors should not impugn and undermine the legitimate and honorable work ...” of law enforcement. Yet, there is no national census of police misconduct to support the DOJ’s notion that there are only a few bad actors in law enforcement. Indeed, DOJ’s own investigative reports over the past eight years document systemic unlawful policing practices of local law enforcement in cities across the country.

"The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund will continue to fight to uphold the intentions of this nation’s laws and, in particular, the provisions that seek to protect the civil rights of all citizens who come into contact with law enforcement."

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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.