Baltimore Consent Decree Vital Step for Residents Who Have Waited Decades for Reform

Statement of NAACP Legal Defense Fund President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill on Baltimore Consent Decree

Today, the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) and Baltimore City officials announced that they have entered into a court-enforceable agreement, a consent decree, to address alleged unlawful policing practices of the Baltimore Police Department. The 227--page agreement comes 21 months after the police in-custody death of Freddie Gray, an unarmed Black man, and public demands for a federal civil rights probe of the city's police department. Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., issued the following statement:

"We thank Justice Department and Baltimore City officials for responding to residents' requests that officials expeditiously, yet thoroughly, negotiate a consent decree to resolve extensive civil rights violations alleged in DOJ's investigative report. The timely consent decree builds on the momentum and expertise of the parties and city residents who have waited decades for policing reform in Baltimore.

"Recognizing that community feedback and support of the consent decree is vital to its success, Justice Department and City officials have agreed to ask the federal judge assigned to the case to order a public comment period and hearing during which residents and other stakeholders may offer feedback on the agreement. The NAACP Legal Defense Fund (LDF) welcomes this opportunity and looks forward to partnering with residents to thoroughly review and comment on the consent decree in an effort to support vital policing reforms in Baltimore.

"We are also eager to work with residents, and federal and state officials to identify a trusted and qualified independent team of monitors to oversee the implementation of the consent decree. LDF will continue to build on its work with the community, such as the September 7, 2016 town hall we co-sponsored, at which DOJ lawyers were present, to support members of the community in sharing their perspectives on reform."

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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. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.