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LDF Commends Department of Justice for Ensuring Funds Will No Longer be Granted to Law Enforcement Agencies With Discriminatory Practices

Today, the Department of Justice responded to the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) call to cease funding law enforcement departments with discriminatory practices. DOJ will institute a process to prevent funds from being provided to these law enforcement departments.

In response, Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel of LDF, issued the following statement:

“The Civil Rights Act of 1964 is one of the most consequential civil rights statutes ever enacted in this country. At the heart of the Act is Title VI, which forbids the provision of federal funds to state and local programs that engage in racial discrimination. Since 2015, LDF has repeatedly emphasized in testimony before Congress and President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, in meetings with Department of Justice officials, in public calls for reform, and most recently in a direct, public request to Attorney General Garland, how important it is to ensure that law enforcement recipients of federal funds comply with the non-discrimination provisions of Title VI.

“Law enforcement agencies engaged in discriminatory policing practices should not receive and utilize taxpayer-supported grants. For example, funding from DOJ has been used by the Pasco County Sheriff’s Office’s to harass residents law enforcement assumes to be likely future offenders in its ‘Prolific Offender Program.’ The DOJ’s decision to assess this program and call for its cessation is a welcome step in the right direction.

“Today’s announcement by the DOJ that it will undertake a comprehensive review of its protocols for ensuring compliance with Title VI is an important step toward making sure that federal funds are not used in a discriminatory manner by state and local law enforcement agencies. We will closely monitor DOJ’s review of its protocols for assessing that grants to law enforcement agencies comply with Title VI.

“At the beginning of this Attorney General’s term, we highlighted the urgent need to address discrimination by law enforcement recipients of federal funds, particularly in light of the ever-growing national crisis of police violence deployed against communities of color. We also argued that the DOJ is uniquely positioned—and obligated—to enforce the non-discrimination requirements of Title VI, which should reduce law enforcement surveillance, harassment, and violence against Black and Brown people in the U.S. We are gratified to

see that this administration and the DOJ are serious about their obligation to rigorously enforce Title VI's essential non-discrimination requirements.”

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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. LDF 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.

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