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NAACP Legal Defense Fund Submits Comments on Chicago Police Consent Decree

(Washington, D.C.) | The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) today offered comments on the draft consent decree between the Illinois Attorney General’s Office and the City of Chicago requiring reform of the Chicago Police Department (CPD). In a letter addressed to Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel and Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, LDF commended the draft’s “many promising provisions” while suggesting several ways to strengthen the proposed reforms. LDF’s proposals include expanded public input on CPD policies and strategic plans, alternatives to arrest for certain low-level non-violent offenses, and an extension of the oversight period from five to 10 years.

“The Justice Department’s 2017 report erased any doubt that the status quo in Chicago needs to change,” said LDF President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill. “Although the Justice Department has abandoned police reform under the Trump Administration, the City of Chicago and the Illinois Attorney General’s Office – along with many private citizens – have forged ahead with the difficult work of transforming the Chicago Police Department. The draft consent decree is an encouraging start in that long process, and we ask all parties involved to seriously consider our proposals for strengthening this vital agreement.”

“For decades, communities of color in Chicago have endured unlawful, discriminatory, and ineffective policing,” said Monique Dixon, Deputy Director of Policy and Senior Counsel at LDF. “This consent decree is an essential step towards reversing that painful history, and it must be as strong as possible. We believe that our suggestions, if adopted, will increase accountability, limit the unlawful use of force, and give ordinary citizens a greater say in how they are policed, leading to a stronger and safer Chicago for all.”