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LDF Files FOIA Requests to Determine Legality of the Deployment of Federal Law Enforcement Personnel to “Control” D.C. Protests

Today, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) sent Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests to the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Marshals Service, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to determine what, if any, authority U.S. Attorney General William Barr had to deploy individuals in these respective departments to operate in Washington D.C. to “control” protesters. The requests were also sent to determine whether these departments were appropriately deputized and operating within their authority.

In response to peaceful protests occurring in May and June 2020 in the nation’s capital, the federal government deployed law enforcement personnel from several federal agencies. The decision to do so, and the manner in which the personnel were deployed, threatened protesters’ ability to safely exercise their constitutional right to voice their demands for racial justice and systemic reform.

“Peaceful D.C. protesters were met with militaristic, organized force from multiple federal agencies,” said LDF Senior Counsel Natasha Merle. “The deployment of these law enforcement personnel was completely unprovoked and unnecessary, and resulted in the same kind of brutality that protesters are demonstrating against. These FOIA requests will help us determine whether Mr. Barr had the authority to send these personnel into the streets of D.C. and whether these actions violated the rights of concerned citizens.”

Read the FOIA requests LDF sent to the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Marshals Service, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

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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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