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Contact: LDF Media  
212-965-2200 / [media@naacpldf.org](mailto:media@naacpldf.org)

## **NAACP Legal Defense Fund Submits Comments on Proposed Chicago Consent Decree**

### *Suggestions offered as Justice Department Plans to Oppose Reforms*

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) submitted comments today on the proposed agreement between the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois to reform the Chicago Police Department. LDF's comments come as Attorney General Jeff Sessions has signaled his intention to try and undermine the agreement, which is known as a consent decree.

“As our comments suggest, this agreement is not perfect,” said LDF President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill. “But it is an important step towards enhancing public safety, protecting residents’ rights, and restoring relationships between police officers and those they serve. Countless residents, law enforcement officers, and state and local officials have worked tirelessly to achieve a framework that provides opportunity to address decades-long unconstitutional policing in Chicago. They deserve this chance to create a safer and more just city. For this administration to try and smother that chance – using the public’s money, as well as the baseless argument that police reform will somehow increase crime – is simply indefensible. The Department of Justice is not a party to this matter, and we trust that a federal court will reject this brazenly political move.”

LDF's comments provide recommendations for strengthening the proposed consent decree's provisions on impartial policing, use of force, officer misconduct, school policing, and the decree's implementation and monitoring.

“The draft consent decree contains many promising changes which could help reduce the two main sources of community distrust in Chicago: excessive use of force and racially biased policing,” said LDF Deputy Director of Policy and Senior Counsel Monique Dixon. “Our comments are aimed at making this agreement even stronger by clarifying policies, improving

training, and giving the community more input in how it is policed, among other provisions. We hope the court will give our suggestions serious consideration as this process continues.”

The proposed agreement is the result of negotiations between the City of Chicago and the office of the Illinois Attorney General. Earlier this week, Attorney General Sessions announced that the U.S. Justice Department plans to file objections to the agreement. Sessions has claimed, without evidence, that the agreement will increase crime, even though gun crime in Chicago has decreased in the last two years while reform efforts have moved forward.

A Justice Department report issued in January of 2017 found that the Chicago Police Department had engaged in a pattern or practice of unconstitutional policing. When Attorney General Sessions took office shortly thereafter, the Justice Department ended preliminary negotiations with the City of Chicago for a federal consent decree.

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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.*