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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

The DOJ Announces Details of the President’s Law Enforcement Commission, Reaffirming the Civil Rights Concerns Around Its Establishment

Today, Attorney General William Barr revealed further details about the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice – an initiative that was first announced in October 2019 through executive order. The commission, in both its composition and mandate, reflects this administration’s rejection of nationwide policing reform efforts.

“President Trump has found yet another initiative of former President Obama that he hopes to unravel – policing reform. Today’s announcement sharing the details of the Presidential Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice reflects what the civil rights community has known all along – that this commission is designed to advance a conception of public safety that emphasizes an uncritical view of law enforcement, and ignores the legitimate and pressing demands for public safety policies that promote community voice and engagement and challenge unconstitutional policing,” said [Sherrilyn Ifill](#), the President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF).

“Among the questions the commission has been asked to study, none relate to ending police brutality and misconduct, advancing models of community policing, or promoting diversity in law enforcement,” Ifill continued. “The commission’s membership is made up exclusively of law enforcement officials, excluding community and civil rights voices, and the input of scholars who have studied and advanced the most-widely respected innovations in 21st century policing practices. Moreover, this commission is announced in the third year of this administration’s failure to robustly investigate systematic patterns of unconstitutional policing, which the Attorney General is empowered to do under the federal [Law Enforcement Misconduct Statute](#).”

[Monique Dixon](#), who directs LDF’s [Policing Reform Campaign](#), added, “The composition and charge of this commission reveals its misguided focus. It is a transparent attempt to counter the comprehensive, bipartisan, and highly-regarded blueprint for 21st century policing created by the policing reform commission convened by President Obama. That commission included voices of community leaders, civil rights activists, scholars, and law enforcement, and [issued a report](#) that guided law enforcement agencies around the country in modernizing and transforming policing practices and policies. Despite this administration’s efforts to undo that work, policing reform will continue – driven by the concentrated efforts of local communities and civil rights activists and lawyers who continue to demand change in public safety practices.”

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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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