



For Immediate Release
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**LDF Statement on the Department of Justice Declining to Prosecute NYPD Police Officer
for Unlawful Choking Death of Eric Garner**

Today, the U.S. Department of Justice refused to hold Officer Daniel Pantaleo responsible for his role in the July 2014 choking death of Eric Garner. [Sherrilyn Ifill](#), President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), issued the following statement:

“This decision is a devastating disappointment. It constitutes a betrayal of Mr. Garner’s family, New Yorkers, and African Americans across the country who have waited five years for justice in this case. It confirms for so many in communities around this country that the lives of ordinary African Americans do not matter when they are confronted by the police. The Justice Department has been the resource communities have turned to when state and local criminal justice has failed us. This decision affirms that we cannot count on this Justice Department to rigorously enforce the civil rights of African Americans. Any legitimate system of justice requires accountability.

“The failure of the Justice Department to bring charges in this case underscores the necessity for the NYPD to take disciplinary action against all of the officers involved. We still await the outcome from the NYPD departmental trial of Officer Pantaleo and demand that NYPD Commissioner O’Neill take action to remove Mr. Pantaleo from the force and move forward with disciplinary trials of the other officers involved. In just the past year we have learned about how Mr. Garner’s life was de-valued by the NYPD. We know now that although Eric Garner was a husband, a son, and a father, an NYPD Lieutenant callously called his death “no big deal” in the hours after his death.

“At the same time, we recognize that individual accountability alone is not enough. As a member of Communities United for Police Reform (CPR), LDF continues to work on [broad-based policing reform in New York City](#). We call on community members to fight for real reform by supporting our efforts.

“Today, our thoughts are with Mr. Garner’s family and friends, who have tirelessly fought for accountability in this case. We will strive to honor Mr. Garner’s legacy by continuing to pursue justice for victims of police violence in New York City and throughout the country.”

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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.