

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2310

May 29, 2020

The Honorable William P. Barr
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Barr:

We write to request that the Department of Justice work with state and local officials to investigate the death of George Floyd and to immediately open an investigation to evaluate unconstitutional patterns and practices of violent policing targeting communities of color in the Minneapolis Police Department that contributed to Mr. Floyd's tragic and unjust death on May 25, 2020.

Video taken by several witnesses shows that George Floyd—who is black and was unarmed—was handcuffed and pinned to the ground by a police officer who held his knee against Mr. Floyd's neck as he pleaded for his life. Mr. Floyd was on the ground repeatedly telling the officer that he could not breathe, and despite that fact that bystanders are heard on video begging the officer to relent, he did not remove his knee from Mr. Floyd's neck until after an ambulance arrived. Eventually Mr. Floyd loses consciousness; he was pronounced dead after being transported to a local hospital.¹

The City of Minneapolis has fired the officers involved and has requested that the Federal Bureau of Investigation review the incident along with local authorities. But that is not enough. Given the repeated instances of police violence that have resulted in the deaths of several citizens—a disproportionate share of whom have been black men—we ask that the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department conduct an investigation into the patterns and practices of racially discriminatory and violent policing in the MPD. The Department should also be prepared to use the strongest tools available—including the use of court-supervised consent decrees—to ensure oversight, enforcement, and accountability on an ongoing basis.

Those responsible must be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law in order to serve justice for George Floyd and his loved ones. And we must work toward justice for the community, which means ensuring that the MPD accounts for and eliminates any

¹ <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2020/05/26/fbi-bca-investigate-death-of-man-in-minneapolis-police-custody>

unconstitutional police practices. It is imperative that the Department of Justice do its part toward that end.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator

/s/ Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

/s/ Patrick Leahy
United States Senator

/s/ Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Mazie Hirono
United States Senator

/s/ Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/ Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ Jon Tester
United States Senator

/s/ Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

/s/ Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/ Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

/s/ Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

/s/ Brian Schatz
United States Senator

/s/ Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

/s/ Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

/s/ Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

/s/ Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator