

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2310

June 11, 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 follow up on our May 29 request that the Department of Justice work with state and local officials to investigate the killing of George Floyd at the hands of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) and immediately open an investigation to evaluate the MPD's unconstitutional patterns and practices of violent policing targeting communities of color in Minneapolis. While we have not yet received a response to our letter, you appeared on *Face the Nation* on June 7 and stated that you "don't think necessarily starting a pattern or practice investigation at this stage is warranted."¹ We write to ask for an explanation for this statement, as well as why you have not responded to our letter.

The Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice has the authority to investigate patterns and practices of racially discriminatory and violent policing at law enforcement departments. The authority is an essential tool for ensuring lawful and fair police practices. Under President Obama, the Justice Department opened 25 pattern and practice investigations across the country, and used court-supervised consent decrees to ensure lasting changes to the systems, conduct, and outcomes of policing by requiring continued oversight, enforcement, and accountability. This Administration has only opened one pattern and practice investigation into a single unit of the Springfield Police Department in Massachusetts.²

We have all seen the horrifying and gut-wrenching video of George Floyd pinned to the ground by a police officer who held his knee against Mr. Floyd's neck as he pleaded for his life. None of the officers on the scene responded when Mr. Floyd repeatedly cried out that he could not breathe. All four officers have now been fired and criminally charged by Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation is investigating whether federal charges are appropriate.

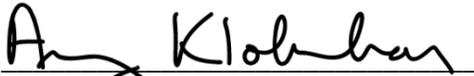
But justice in this case requires a full scale pattern and practice review of the MPD, and as we stated in our letter, it is critical that the Department of Justice begin this review immediately.

¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/bill-barr-george-floyd-protests-blm-face-the-nation-transcript/>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/09/trump-pattern-or-practice/>

Appearing on a Sunday show is not an acceptable response to our letter. It is imperative that you formally inform us of your decision whether to open a pattern and practice investigation at the MPD. If you believe, as you implied on the show, that such an investigation is not warranted, we ask that you provide a full explanation why, given these outrageous facts, you would refuse to initiate the investigation.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
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 K. 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/ Christopher S. Murphy
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/ Jon Tester
United States Senator