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To: shaw@hq.aclu-wa.org
Date: Mon, 10 Oct 2011 17:27:03 -0700
Subject: DOJ investigation update

Dear Police Accountability Allies,

You may have seen some articles in the paper recently about DOJ activity in Seattle so I wanted to give you an update to share what we know about the status of the investigation. As we understand it, the investigation will continue until the DOJ and/or the US Attorney's Office issues a statement saying that it is completed. The DOJ investigators continue to collect stories and information from people in the community regarding the Seattle Police Department's use of force or allegations of discriminatory conduct. **Please to urge members of your community and others to contact the DOJ investigators with information about the Seattle Police Department's conduct at (855-203-4479) or by e-mail at Community.Seattle@usdoj.gov.** I am attaching the document that we created with the contact information – please feel free to continue to share it widely.

History:

Last March DOJ opened their investigation to determine whether SPD has engaged in a pattern or practice of excessive use of force or discriminatory policing. This is a civil investigation that could result in a lawsuit or technical assistance from the DOJ to the Seattle Police. No criminal charges will result from this investigation.

Locally the investigation is being handled by Assistant US Attorney Mike Diaz and his staff at the US Attorney's Office in Seattle. Investigators from DC have come to Seattle at least twice. On each occasion they interviewed individuals about their experiences with the Seattle Police and spoke with groups from communities throughout Seattle as well as other advocates, elected officials and people from the SPD.

More recently:

DOJ has requested documents from SPD and the investigators and experts are in the process of analyzing the information. We have not seen the records requests nor have we seen any of the documents that were produced. We believe that they have obtained records from incidents involving use of force. They have retained at least one expert, Jack McDevitt from Northeastern University, to analyze the information that they have obtained.

In September, Mr. McDevitt came to Seattle to conduct a series of "focus groups". He met with several groups of community advocates throughout the city and asked them to discuss three questions: what is the SPD doing well, what are they doing poorly and what recommendations for change should the SPD should implement or adopt? Mr. McDevitt was retained by DOJ but agreed to ask whether he could share his report from those "focus groups" with the attendees.

Other DOJ efforts:

DOJ appears to be conducting a separate **criminal** investigation into the shooting of John T. Williams. This is an investigation to determine whether criminal charges should be filed against Ian Birk or others and is not connected to the civil "pattern or practice" investigation. There have been no statements from DOJ or the local US Attorney's office regarding the criminal investigation. Some information about the investigation can be gleaned from this recent [Seattle Times article](#).

Going forward:

We will continue to monitor the activities of the SPD and the progress of the investigation as best we can. Please know that neither the DOJ staff nor the local US Attorney's staff will make public statements about the investigation until they have completed their work or unless they need additional assistance from the public. Occasionally, we learn things through news reports and other sources and we will share information as we hear it. I also invite you all to share anything that you might have heard.

Thanks once again for working to ensure that the motto "To Serve and Protect" has meaning for all of our community in Seattle.

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