



Friday, November 21, 2014

Dear Mr. President -

As national civil and human rights organizations and leaders committed to the protection of the rights of African Americans and all Americans, we come together again, as we did in the immediate aftermath of Michael Brown's death to urge you to use all necessary actions to not only reassure the citizens of Ferguson and the nation, but to protect the constitutional rights to free speech and assembly for all. While we all await the decision of the grand jury impaneled to decide whether or not to indict Michael Brown's killer, Darren Wilson, and as we all continue to mourn the loss of Michael Brown and all of the unarmed people of color who are killed daily on our streets, we must not allow people of Ferguson to once again be victimized by those put in office to serve and protect them.

As this nation prepares to respond to the grand jury decision, we expect that the people in Ferguson and around the country will take to the streets in peaceful protest. We request that you immediately address the nation to calm mounting tensions and to ensure the residents of Ferguson that they are permitted to exercise their constitutional rights without once again being victimized by those put in office to serve and protect them.

President Obama, we commend the actions you have already taken to speak with Governor Nixon and offer the Administration's support. We now ask you to further exercise your authority to ensure that the citizens of Ferguson and others engaged in peaceful protests will not be treated as second class citizens, subjected to unnecessary militaristic and overly aggressive policing tactics of the sort many feel contributed to Michael Brown's killing. The actions taken by Attorney General Holder are extremely appreciated and we hope such vigilance will continue with the Attorney General nominee Loretta Lynch after her confirmation. We look forward to the progress of the federal investigations and hope this will provide some needed resolution in Ferguson and other affected communities.

Not just America, but the whole world will again be watching Ferguson, and it is imperative that this time we get it right. All steps must be taken to ensure that our citizens' constitutional right to protest is protected, and that no one is subjected to abuse harassment, or punishment for having chosen to exercise that sacred right. Additionally, in light of the continued mistrust and concern of law enforcement in the Ferguson community, we request there be **proper federal oversight** to provide an added layer of protection for all residents.

While we continue to work not only with the White House, the Department of Justice, and Congress for long term systemic change through the implementation of our recommendations in our previously released "Unified Statement," we must also remain focused on the still unstable situation in Ferguson and encourage more professional and respectful responses from elected officials and law enforcement alike. Even as we urge for the immediate release of an updated

Racial Profiling guidance for law enforcement, we stand in solidarity with young leaders like Jerika Taylor, Antoine White otherwise known as “T-Dubb,” clergy and the many others on the ground who simply want officials “to do their job and to remember who they are in office to serve and protect.”

Mr. President, the world is watching how the United States responds when faced with situations such as the one in Ferguson. As our nation sends our sons and daughters to fight for the rights of citizens abroad, we cannot afford to be hypocritical in our actions at home. While we hope for the best, all of our organizations will continue to monitor the situation in Ferguson and other cities and **take necessary actions** to uphold our laws and fight for justice for all.

Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

- Barbara Arnwine, President and Executive Director
- Tanya Clay House, Public Policy Director

A. Phillip Randolph Institute

- Clayola Brown, President

Advancement Project

- Judith Browne Dianis, Co-Director
- Shuya Ohno, Project Director

African American Policy Forum

- Kimberle Crenshaw, Executive Director

American Civil Liberties Union

- Laura Murphy, Director of the Washington Legislative Office
- Dennis Parker, Director of our Racial Justice Program

Empowerment Temple AME Church

- Pastor Jamal Bryant

Hip Hop Caucus

- Reverend Lennox Yearwood, President and CEO

Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

- Wade Henderson, President and CEO
- Nancy Zirkin, Executive Vice President
- Lisa Bornstein, Legal Director

Muslim Advocates

- Farhana Khera, President and Executive Director

NAACP

- Cornell Williams Brooks, President and CEO

NAACP-Legal Defense Fund

- Sherrilyn Ifill, President and Director-Counsel
- Janai Nelson, Associate Director-Counsel
- Leslie Proff, Director, Washington DC Office
- Vincent Southerland, Senior Counsel, Criminal Justice Project

National Bar Association

- Pamela Meanes, President

National Coalition on Black Civic Participation

- Melanie Campbell, President and CEO, Convener of Black Women’s Roundtable

PICO National Network

- Rev. Michael McBride, Director of Urban Strategies and Lifelines to Healing Campaign

Rainbow Push Coalition

- Reverend Jesse Jackson, Jr.