For Immediate Release
Media Contacts:

Paula Thornton-Greear
773-451-3536 (desk)
773-285-8034 (cell)
pgreear@thechicagourbanleague.org

Amanda Battles
773-451-3508 (desk)
773-294-2329 (cell)
abattles@thechicagourbanleague.org

Chicago Urban League Calling for Federal Investigation of the Chicago Police Department

CHICAGO, IL (Nov. 25, 2015) – The Chicago Urban League (CUL) is formally requesting a U.S. Department of Justice "pattern and practice" investigation into the Chicago Police Department (CPD), CUL Interim President and CEO Shari Runner announced today.

"We believe CPD officers have engaged in the systemic use of excessive force and carried out a pattern of discriminatory harassment against African American residents in the city," Runner said. "Furthermore, they have been dishonest about those practices, in some cases even covering up illegal activity."

CUL's call comes one day after the city released dash-cam video of the shooting death of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald by CPD officer Jason Van Dyke.

"Chicago Urban League is demanding accountability from the Chicago Police Department," Runner said. "There are too many African American citizens dying at the hands of rogue officers who are sworn to serve and protect them."

Runner called on CPD to adopt consistent and fair practices that protect all the city's residents, not just some. And when officers do violate the law, the response needs to be swift and severe, she said.

"The mixed-message of purported concern yet muted response – or even denial – we've seen from CPD's top management highlights the lack of transparency and due process when it comes to officer-involved shootings," Runner said. "It is imperative that the Department of Justice step in and correct this conduct before there is any more loss of life."

McDonald was shot 16 times, many of those shots fired into the teenager's back and while he was on the ground. The video clearly shows McDonald walking away from Officer Van Dyke, who was not in imminent danger. Yet it took more than 13 months – 400 days – to charge Van Dyke with murder.

"That's too long for this to be called justice," Runner said.

(more)

Earlier this week, CPD Superintendent Garry F. McCarthy flip-flopped, yet again, on the issue of whether to terminate Officer Dante Servin who fatally shot Rekia Boyd three years ago while off duty.

McCarthy has veered from saying Servin should never have been charged to this week recommending his termination following a recommendation from the Independent Police Review Board.

"That kind of inconsistency is breeding contempt in Chicago's communities of color," Runner said.

Therefore, the CUL is also calling for Chicago Superintendent of Police, Garry F. McCarthy to be fired and the resignation of State's Attorney Anita Alvarez.

"Accountability means just that, and change is warranted in what has clearly been a major miscarriage of justice," Runner said.

CUL demands answers to the following questions:

> • What had CPD done about the more than 18 civilian complaints reportedly brought against Officer Van Dyke?

> • Why are there such long delays in charging CPD police officers in excessive force incidents?

Unconvinced that the Chicago Police Department can answer those questions on its own, CUL insists that a DOJ investigation is necessary.

"We encourage continued peaceful and responsible protests as we await the murder trial of Officer Van Dyke," Runner said, "but we are also requesting that, in the meantime, the city, state and federal governments intervene to determine what went wrong here, and begin to institute reforms to return fairness and equity to our justice system. Justice should not be served only when it is politically expedient."

About the Chicago Urban League
Established in 1916, the Chicago Urban League works for economic, educational and social progress for African Americans and promotes strong sustainable communities through advocacy, collaboration and innovation. For more information, visit www.thechicagourbanleague.org. Find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

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