



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

October 16, 2015

The Honorable Steve Cohen
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cohen:

This responds to your letter to the Attorney General, dated July 22, 2015, regarding your request that the Department of Justice (the Department) conduct an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the shooting death of Darrius Stewart by a Memphis police officer. You further request that the Department investigate the practices of the Memphis Police Department and suggest that we deploy our Community Relations Service to Memphis to address tensions stemming from the shooting incident. We apologize for our delay in responding to your letter.

As noted in your letter, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 14141, authorizes the Department to investigate whether law enforcement officers have engaged in conduct that constitutes a pattern or practice of violating the Constitution or other federal law. The Department may also seek relief for a pattern or practice of conduct by law enforcement officers that deprives persons of rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or federal laws.

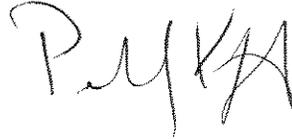
In addition, under the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. § 2000g-1, and the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, P.L. 111-84, § 4707, the Department's Community Relations Service is authorized to assist state and local governments, private and public organizations, law enforcement, and community groups with preventing and resolving tensions within communities and facilitating open discussion that can lead to collaborative solutions to conflicts arising from differences of race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability.

Federal authorities are aware of Mr. Stewart's death and are monitoring the state investigation. Once that investigation is completed, we will determine what, if any, additional investigation or steps are necessary. If this matter involves a prosecutable violation of federal criminal civil rights statutes, we will take appropriate action.

The Honorable Stephen I. Cohen
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We hope this information is helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we may provide additional assistance regarding this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "PJKA". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.

Peter J. Kadzik
Assistant Attorney General