

STEVE COHEN

9TH DISTRICT, TENNESSEE

1005 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

TELEPHONE: (202) 225-3265
FAX: (202) 225-5663

CLIFFORD DAVIS/ODELL HORTON
FEDERAL BUILDING
167 NORTH MAIN STREET
SUITE 369
MEMPHIS, TN 38103

TELEPHONE: (901) 544-4131
FAX: (901) 544-4329

www.cohen.house.gov

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4209

September 5, 2012

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

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The Honorable Eric H. Holder Jr.
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez
Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Holder and Assistant Attorney General Perez:

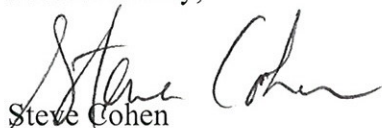
Thank you for your continuing efforts to improve the administration of justice at the Juvenile Court of Memphis and Shelby County (JCMSC) in the aftermath of the thorough investigation conducted by the Department of Justice (DOJ). I am concerned, as I know you are, about the levels of transparency and accountability in the process of addressing the shortcomings your report identified. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss with an appropriate member of your staff the status of the Department's efforts to reform the Court and some of the concerns I have received from stakeholders in my community about this process.

I am attaching a letter from Shelby County Commissioner Henri E. Brooks, who has been a longtime advocate for improving the JCMSC and who joined me in expressing concerns about the Court to DOJ in 2007. She believes the committees DOJ established to develop reforms to the Court lack the independence and transparency they require. She has also requested that other community stakeholders be invited to join this process and have meaningful input. I respectfully request that the concerns she has identified be addressed when your office briefs me on this matter.

I applaud the serious attention the Department has given to identifying and resolving the constitutional violations occurring at the JCMSC. I would appreciate meeting with an appropriate member of your staff to discuss your ongoing reform efforts and ways to improve its transparency and accountability. To schedule a meeting, please contact David Greengrass in my office at 202-225-3265. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

As always, I remain,

Most sincerely,


Steve Cohen

Member of Congress