

Senate Democrats challenge Attorney General's review of consent decrees

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WASHINGTON D.C. – U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined U.S. Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ), Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) yesterday in urging Attorney General Jeff Sessions to reconsider his recent [decision](#) to review the use of consent decrees in cases of police violence, which could thwart efforts to protect civil rights and improve public safety. Existing consent decrees serve to support sweeping police reform with the intention of putting a stop to civil rights abuses, but Sessions' recent actions threaten such initiatives.

"We write to express serious concern regarding your recent troubling comments suggesting the Department of Justice may reverse its policy on the use of consent decrees to combat civil rights abuses by state and local police departments," the Senators wrote. "We urge the Justice Department to continue prioritizing the use of consent decrees to combat civil rights abuses by law enforcement when they occur. We must not retreat from proven, effective approaches to correcting systemic practices that undermine the sacred American value of equal justice under law."

"Officer safety and morale, and appropriate oversight of widespread patterns of civil rights abuses, are not antithetical – they are clearly inextricably linked," the Senators added.