



Duckworth, Durbin Join Klobuchar, Smith and Colleagues to Reiterate Call for DOJ Investigation into Racially Discriminatory and Violent Policing at Mi

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) joined Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Tina Smith (D-MN), along with 21 colleagues, to follow up on their [previous letter from May 29](#) to Attorney General Barr requesting that the Department of Justice (DOJ) open an investigation into patterns and practices of racially discriminatory and violent policing in the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). In today's letter, the Senators asked for an explanation from Barr on why he did not respond to their first letter and requested an explanation for his statements on June 7 in an [appearance](#) on Face the Nation during which he said, "I don't think necessarily starting a pattern or practice investigation at this stage is warranted."

"Appearing on a Sunday show is not an acceptable response to our letter. It is imperative that you formally inform us of your decision whether to open a pattern and practice investigation at the MPD. If you believe, as you implied on the show, that such an investigation is not warranted, we ask that you provide a full explanation why, given these outrageous facts, you would refuse to initiate the investigation." the lawmakers wrote.

Duckworth, Durbin, Klobuchar and Smith were joined by Senators Ed Markey (D-MA), Tom Carper (D-DE), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Chris Coons (D-DE), Jack Reed (D-RI), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Bob Casey (D-

PA), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and Jon Tester (D-MT).

Full text of the letter can be found [HERE](#) and below.

Dear Attorney General Barr:

We write to follow up on our May 29 request that the Department of Justice work with state and local officials to investigate the death of George Floyd and immediately open an investigation to evaluate unconstitutional patterns and practices of violent policing targeting communities of color in the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD). While we have not yet received a response to our letter, you appeared on *Face the Nation* on June 7 and stated that you “don’t think necessarily starting a pattern or practice investigation at this stage is warranted.” We write to ask for an explanation for this statement, as well as why you have not responded to our letter.

The Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice has the authority to investigate patterns and practices of racially discriminatory and violent policing at law enforcement departments. The authority is an essential tool for ensuring lawful and fair police practices. Under President Obama, the Justice Department opened 25 pattern and practice investigations across the country, and used court-supervised consent decrees to ensure oversight, enforcement, and accountability. This Administration has only opened one pattern and practice investigation into a single unit of the Springfield Police Department in Massachusetts.

We have all seen the horrifying and gut-wrenching video of George Floyd pinned to the ground by a police officer who held his knee against Mr. Floyd’s neck as he pleaded for his life. None of the officers on the scene responded when Mr. Floyd repeatedly cried out that he could not breathe. All four officers have now been charged by Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation is investigating whether federal charges are appropriate.

But justice in this case requires a full scale pattern and practice review of the MPD, and as we stated in our letter, it is critical that the Department of Justice begin this review immediately.

Appearing on a Sunday show is not an acceptable response to our letter. It is imperative that you formally inform us of your decision whether to open a pattern and practice investigation at the MPD. If you believe, as you implied on the show, that such an

investigation is not warranted, we ask that you provide a full explanation why, given these outrageous facts, you would refuse to initiate the investigation.