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December 4, 2015

The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch
Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

I write to urge the Department of Justice to open an investigation into the shooting death of Laquan McDonald and the Chicago Police Department (CPD). Every aspect of government involvement in this case should be looked at because our community cannot be fully safe until there is trust and transparency between the police, local governments and the communities they protect and serve.

The brutal and senseless murder of Laquan McDonald at the hands of a Chicago police officer and the lack of transparency and accountability after the tragedy are indicative of systemic problems throughout CPD. The public suspects a cover-up, given that it took more than a year to release the incriminating dashcam videos, police reports appear to have been falsified, and the suspicion that the police may have tampered with footage of the shooting.

It is difficult to really know what the facts are and who, in addition to the shooting officer, needs to be held accountable. I believe that the only way that Chicagoans will begin to have confidence in accountability and the facts is if the Department of Justice steps in and conducts a full and impartial investigation into the circumstances related to the shooting of Laquan McDonald, from what led to the shooting to how law enforcement responded to that shooting up until right now.

I also join Senator Richard Durbin (IL), Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and others in calling on the Department of Justice to open an investigation into the CPD to ascertain whether CPD's policies and practices are consistent with federal law and the U.S. Constitution. DOJ's Civil Rights Division has the authority and is ideally suited to investigate CPD civil rights policies and/or violations and to impose reforms to prevent future violations.

Thank you for your consideration of this time-sensitive request. Your help is urgently needed to build public confidence in CPD and all those responsible for public safety in Chicago. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luis V. Gutierrez". The signature is stylized with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping underline.

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress