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Media contact: Marlene Sallo
Staff Director
(202) 376-7700
publicaffairs@usccr.gov

U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Announces Investigation into Policing Practices and Use of Deadly Force

WASHINGTON – The United States Commission on Civil Rights today announced that it will conduct a briefing on policing practices and use of deadly force. The purpose of the project is to identify different strategies and tactics that could be employed to avoid lethal police interactions with minority communities and to recommend other reforms to the legal process used in such cases.

The Commission is gravely concerned with the multiple recent incidents resulting in the deaths of unarmed black men at the hands of the police. The deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner are not isolated incidents and not limited to the black community, but are part of what the Commission believes is a systemic law enforcement failure in minority communities that has led to public frustration, fear, and a call for justice across the nation.

This public frustration also results from the decisions not to indict the police officers responsible for the deaths, and has resulted in protests following the decisions that erupted across the country, from New York City to Los Angeles, on campuses and cities and towns of all sizes, even on professional basketball courts.

The U.S. Department of Justice will conduct an investigation regarding potential civil rights violations and the Commission fully supports this inquiry. The Commission and its State Advisory Committees have released multiple reports concerning police misconduct, including *Who is Guarding the Guardians* (1981), *Revisiting Who is Guarding the Guardians* (2000), and *Police Practices and Civil Rights in New York City* (2000).

To expand upon those previous investigations into police misconduct and the internal and external responses to them, the Commission will commence a project, *Policing Practices and Prosecution of Police Deadly Force*. The project will include a briefing with panels on police procedures, training, strategy, tactics and accountability, as well as on prosecutor accountability and transparency.

Chairman Martin R. Castro stated, “This is an issue of utmost importance as it involves whether communities of color are being protected or targeted by the very people to whom we must look to for protection and security. This is broader than Ferguson. Most police officers do their duty yet it is obvious that not all meet their oath to serve and protect when it comes to communities of color. I look forward to this briefing.”

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. For information about Commission’s reports and meetings, visit <http://www.usccr.gov>.