



JEAN PETERS BAKER Jackson County Prosecuting Attorney

July 26, 2021

The Hon. Merrick B. Garland
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington DC 20530

Re: Civil Rights Investigation of Kansas City Police Department

Dear Attorney General Garland:

I am writing this letter in support of a request from numerous Kansas City, MO, civil rights, community and civic organizations to investigate the Kansas City Police Department, which is greatly troubled by deepening mistrust between it and its community.

In a recent letter to your office, these community voices strongly cited numerous examples of why they felt compelled to make this request. My concerns can be organized this way:

- Too many excessive force and deadly force incidents involving minority community members as victims exist. Currently, five police officers are facing charges related to excessive force; yet, they remain on the force with pay.
- The community has no trust in the investigation of these incidents. Most excessive force cases remain under investigation by the department itself. In recent months, outside police agency agreed to investigate fatal officer-involved incidents. But the community's belief that these investigations are *not* truly independent of KCPD has only grown. Such distrust promises to increase violence in our most harmed urban neighborhoods.
- The overall governance of the department, a state board appointed by a governor with little support in our urban community, is deeply troubling. Kansas City is the only major city in America with no control over its police department. This simply increases distrust and offers few options for the community to address their concerns. The police board and police command can simply ignore the community.

Kansas City's police department suffers from many problems identified in cities now in turmoil about their police force. It has no accountability to our community; it has lost the community's confidence that excessive force will be rooted out and stopped; and the harm from all of this falls in greatest portion on the city's minority community. My office stands ready to assist in your efforts,

Most Sincerely,

Jean Peters Baker
Prosecutor for Jackson County