

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-1504

December 3, 2015

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

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

I urge the Department of Justice to open an investigation into the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to assess whether the CPD's policies and practices comply with the Constitution and federal law.

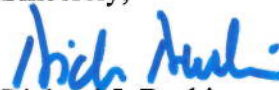
Effective community policing must be built on a foundation of trust, accountability, and mutual respect. The men and women of law enforcement risk their lives every day to protect us, and it is incumbent upon them to live up to the standards they have sworn to uphold. The overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers are conscientious and professional. Nevertheless, there is undeniable evidence that some have abused the authority given them.

The shooting death of Laquan McDonald is just one of a number of troubling incidents that have frayed the relationship between the CPD and the community it serves, and in truth, this most recent incident is only the latest in a series of troubling events over many years. These incidents raise serious concerns about whether the CPD has in place appropriate policies and practices to prevent civil rights violations. An impartial investigation by the Justice Department can help identify those areas where the CPD has fallen short and guide the CPD onto a better course.

As you know, 42 U.S.C. § 14141, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, gives the Civil Rights Division statutory authority to investigate state and local police departments to determine whether they are engaged in a pattern or practice of unlawful conduct that deprives persons of the rights and privileges guaranteed by the Constitution and federal law. A careful investigation of the CPD by the Civil Rights Division will help address any civil rights violations, institute reforms to prevent any future violations, and restore community confidence in the CPD. I urge you to swiftly initiate such an investigation.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter. I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator