

Congress of the United States
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Washington, DC 20515

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Jonathan Smith
Chief of Special Litigation Unit
Office of Civil Rights
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington DC 20530

December 11, 2012

Dear Chief Smith:

I am writing to request that the Special Litigation Unit of the United States Department of Justice promptly conduct a thorough and independent review of the facts and circumstances leading to the use of deadly force by Cleveland Police Officers on November 29, 2012 in East Cleveland, Ohio. The high speed pursuit of a vehicle from the City of Cleveland culminated with officers firing 137 bullets at the driver and occupant of the vehicle, claiming the lives of both individuals, Malissa Williams and Timothy Russell. At this writing, no evidence has publicly surfaced that either Ms. Williams or Mr. Russell fired a weapon or had a firearm.

By any measure, the firing of 137 rounds of ammunition is extreme and warrants a thorough and independent review. The community is concerned that a pattern of unequal treatment exposes African American individuals to practices and policies by members of the Cleveland Police Department in egregious violation of their civil rights, including the use of excessive force. I urge the Department of Justice to review and investigate, so the Greater Cleveland community can have confidence that all circumstances surrounding this incident have been thoroughly examined.

Sincerely,


Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

MLF:bp

Cc: Steven M. Dettlebach, U. S. Attorney - Cleveland, Ohio