



OFFICIAL PRESS STATEMENT

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Release of the Federal Consent Decree

DETROIT -- I have come to add our voice to those who are in fact concerned about the relationship between the Detroit Police Department and the Detroit community. The initiating of the Federal Consent Decree was indeed most important for a city and a Department that required such monitoring. Detroit has a history of incidents which made this initial monitoring necessary and important. This action was necessary in order to ensure to the community that the rights of citizens would be respected and protected on the streets and in the jails. It was also important for those professional police officers who do their job and get up every morning to protect and truly serve the community to preserve their own integrity. This is essential in order to separate themselves from any bad apples that might erode trust and confidence in their Department.

Today it would appear that there is a new and different approach to community policing where the people are engaged and respected. This is not to be confused with community relations where the people are patronized and played on. We have a U.S. Attorney's Office which is sensitive and respectful to the folks in the community, still assuring us that the oversight and monitoring of the Department, although not done in exactly the same manner with a specific Federal Monitor, will still be a priority and an ongoing concern by the Department of Justice. This is still a good thing. One of the ways in which Detroit may not become a Ferguson, Missouri is by respect, community engagement, and a de-escalation of the appearance of a military force inserting itself in a community of law abiding and non-violent citizens. We are also different in that we still have an active Board of Police Commissioners made up of civilians that should be kept intact and not weakened but strengthened to engage the Department on a regular basis. Our city can move forward, can grow together in dignity and respect, if we continue on the road of mutual appreciation and understanding for all citizens.

We must continue to hold meaningful discussions on the progress as well as the challenges that face both the police department and our community as a whole. We must not shy away from the social conditions that may lead to distrust and the lack of economic opportunities that have a tendency to lead to unrest. Today we are here to support this initiative not only to save money but more importantly to save the lives of Detroit citizens and Detroit Police Officers.

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For more information on the Detroit Branch NAACP please call (313) 871-2087 or visit www.detroitnaacp.org.