



RASHIDA TLAIB
13TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN



STEPHANIE CHANG
STATE SENATOR



September 8, 2020

Mayor Michael Duggan
City of Detroit
2 Woodward Ave., Suite 1126
Detroit, MI 48226

Chief James Craig
Detroit Police Department
1301 Third Street
Detroit, MI 48226

Board of Police Commissioners
Suite 767, South
1301 Third Street
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Mayor Duggan and Chief Craig,

We are writing to request an immediate full, independent investigation of the Detroit Police Department's use of excessive force against protestors, legal observers and journalists in recent months. The right to demonstrate, without fear of violence, incarceration or intimidation from law enforcement, is at the core of our democracy.

The right to free speech is one that is fundamental to our country's democracy and critical to ensuring that our beloved city is one where everyone is heard. Protestors and others exercising their constitutional right to speak up about police brutality and racial justice deserve the same protection others receive. No person should fear being beaten, tasered, tear gassed, shot, or killed by law enforcement officers.

The lack of accountability and urgency to investigate claims of excessive force and constitutional violations, coupled with a dismissive attitude of the movement for racial justice, has eroded public trust and community relationships. Internal investigations by the Detroit Police Department cannot fix this. An independent investigation is an important step to restore public trust and show Detroiters that you are invested in the fight for racial justice, acknowledge improvements can be made and that the city is committed to transparency and accountability.

We urge an immediate independent investigation of any and all use of excessive physical force or intimidation against protestors, journalists, or legal observers at all Detroit Will Breathe protests and other related events, including, but not limited to the following incidents:

- May 29, 2020 – Police cars drive fast toward protestors, then stop suddenly, causing fear. Tear gas, riot shields, and batons used by officers later that night.
- May 30, 2020 – Police respond to protestors with tear gas.

- May 31, 2020 – First night of 8pm curfew. Without issuing a dispersal order, police officers use tear gas and chase people into the crowd.
- June 2, 2020 – Police use LRAD, rubber bullets, tear gas.
- June 28, 2020 – Police officers drive directly into a crowd of protestors.
- July 10, 2020 – Hakim Littleton standoff occurs. Tear gas, mace, baton and shield strikes are used. Police place Nakia Wallace in a chokehold.
- August 22, 2020 – Police use batons, tear gas, and pepper spray on protestors, journalists, and legal observers, including individuals already on the ground.

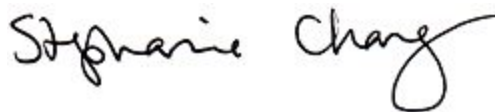
We all play a role in the fight for racial justice and ending police brutality, regardless of our position or skin color. Now is the time for bold and humble leadership, to acknowledge the systemic racism underpinning our police system and to rise to the challenge of changing them. We hope you rise to meet the challenge and lead with courage.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to you taking swift action to restore trust and protect our residents constitutional rights and democracy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Rashida Tlaib
Congresswoman, 13th District



Stephanie Chang
State Senator, District 1



Mary Sheffield
Council President Pro Tempore, District 5



Raquel Castañeda-López
Councilmember, District 6

Cc: Dana Nessel, Michigan Attorney General