

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 9, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Attorney General Sessions:

We respectfully request an update on the implementation of the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013 (Pub. L. No. 113-242). As you know, the law reauthorized the Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2000, which was enacted to require states to report quarterly to the Attorney General information regarding the death of any person in the process of arrest or who is otherwise in law enforcement custody, including jails, prisons, and juvenile facilities. The Department last provided an update in a document entitled “Report of the Attorney General to Congress Pursuant to the Death in Custody Reporting Act” on December 16, 2016. That report laid out steps the Department was taking toward issuing guidelines and collecting data for its first study and report.

Since the law requires the Department to submit to Congress its first study and report of the information collected under the Act no later than two years after the date of enactment,¹ and that date, December 18, 2016, has now passed, we would like another update on the status of the Department’s first study and report. We would also like an update on the Department’s drafting of the final guidelines for collecting the data.

Accurate information on deaths of individuals detained, under arrest, or in the process of being arrested by law enforcement is critical in assessing what additional steps the federal government, as well as local and state governments, may need to take to reduce incidences of avoidable deaths in our criminal justice system. It is thus imperative that the Department enforce and implement the law as it is written to ensure that this data is accurately and timely collected.

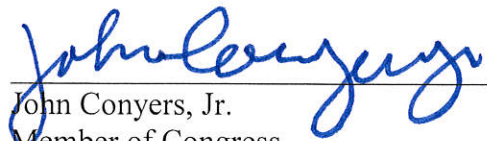
During your confirmation proceedings before the U.S. Senate earlier this year, you confirmed your commitment to enforcing the Death in Custody Reporting Act. You stated that as Attorney General you “will support” the Act’s requirements and the Department’s continuing efforts to “require[] federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to report information regarding deaths of detainees, arrestees, or prisoners while they are in the custody of those agencies.”²

We look forward to your response and the opportunity to receive an update from the Department.

¹ Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013, 42 U.S.C. 13727(f)(2); 42 U.S.C. 13727a(c).

² “Questions from Senator Coons.” *Judiciary.senate.gov*. U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 17 Jan. 17. Web 3 Aug. 2017.

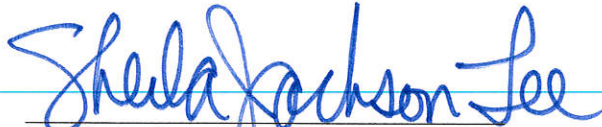
Sincerely,



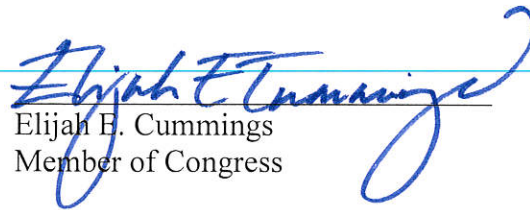
John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress

Cc: Jeri Mulrow, Acting Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice