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June 9, 2016

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

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

I 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 and the Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics provided me and other interested Members of Congress with an informative update on April 28, 2015.

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 enactment¹, I would like another update on the status of that report.

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.

I am particularly interested in getting this report in light of recent law enforcement related deaths in the City of Norfolk, Virginia, which is in my congressional district. According to local media reports, the Norfolk Police Department has been involved in 13 police-related deaths since 2010 – five of those occurring this year.²

¹ Death in Custody Reporting Act of 2013, Pub. L. No. 113-242, § 2(f)(2), 128 Stat. 2860 (2014).

² Gary Harki, *Norfolk police have shot and killed twice as many people as any other agency in Virginia since 2010. Why?*, VIRGINIAN PILOT (May 1, 2016), www.pilotonline.com/news/local/crime/norfolk-police-have-shot-and-killed-twice-as-many-people/article_7ec82615-67e3-5668-bfa4-928bdc4a3874.html; Eric Hartley, *NAACP chief: Body-cam video shows man had a knife when Norfolk police shot him*, VIRGINIAN PILOT (Jun. 3, 2016), www.pilotonline.com/news/local/crime/naacp-chief-body-cam-video-shows-man-had-a-knife/article_9b287528-11b9-51a2-adab-e8af891c7e19.html.

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

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bobby Scott", is positioned above the printed name.

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Member of Congress

CC: Dr. William J. Sabol, Director, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice