

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 23, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala Harris  
Vice President of the United States  
White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Merrick B. Garland  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20530

The Honorable Vanita Gupta  
Associate Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear President Biden, Vice President Harris, Attorney General Garland, and Associate Attorney General Gupta:

We write to urge that the Department of Justice (DOJ) immediately reopen its civil rights investigation into the death of Tamir Rice.

Yesterday's guilty verdict on all three charges in now ex-police Officer Derek Chauvin's trial for the murder of George Floyd was an instance of all too rare basic accountability that followed only after the tireless activism led by the Black community and people of all races across the country. To be clear, the guilty verdict of Chauvin does not represent the conclusive goal of that activism, nor has it provided any kind of reprieve from police brutality.

The senseless, chronic killing of Black people at the hands of law enforcement must end; that can only happen with true accountability and a ravenous pursuit for justice from all levels of government. George Floyd should still be alive. Tamir Rice should still be alive. We cannot bring them back, or any of the many other Black lives taken after an interaction with law enforcement, but we must, at minimum, work to ensure that the pursuit of justice is not in name only. Between 2013 and 2019, 7,666 people were killed by police, and 98.7% of those deaths resulted in no charges whatsoever.<sup>1</sup> This is an untenable failing.

Under the Obama Administration, DOJ opened a federal investigation after Officer Timothy Loehmann was not charged with any crime under state law despite fatally shooting 12-year-old

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/5/31/mapping-us-police-killings-of-black-americans>

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Tamir Rice in a park on November 22, 2014 in Cleveland, Ohio. As is the experience of many Black children and adults, a person called the police on Tamir, who had been sitting alone playing with a toy gun. Officer Loehmann and Officer Frank Garmback were dispatched to the park. Before Officer Garmback had brought the vehicle to a stop, let alone before any kind of genuine assessment of the situation could be made or questions asked, Officer Loehmann fired his gun and fatally shot Tamir. The only assessment made was that Tamir was Black. The DOJ investigation did not conclude prior to the end of President Obama's term, and under the Trump Administration, the investigation was intentionally neglected by political appointees despite two attempts from career civil rights division prosecutors to convene a grand jury. After stalling for two years, the Trump Administration attempted to quietly close the investigation in 2019. It wasn't until more than a year later after a whistleblower made the Trump Administration's blatant attempt to outwait the statute of limitations for obstruction of justice charges known that the investigation's closure was made public.<sup>2</sup>

Accountability for Tamir Rice's death has been stalled for more than six years. Samaria Rice, the mother of Tamir Rice, has asked that DOJ reopen its investigation into her son's case.<sup>3</sup> As constituents of Ohio's 11th congressional district, the Rice family does not have an active Member of Congress to represent them in this moment, but we the undersigned have the responsibility of representing constituents just like the Rice family – Black people in the United States who live under the revolving, intolerable threat of unchecked police brutality.

We are enheartened by the real opportunity to be stewards of our community in partnership with you. We fully support carrying out Samaria Rice's appeal to DOJ immediately, and we further urge that the results of the investigation be made public immediately upon completion.

Sincerely,



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-closing-investigation-2014-officer-involved-shooting-cleveland>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/16/us/tamir-rice-justice.html?referringSource=articleShare>

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/s/

Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

/s/

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

/s/

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

/s/

Cori Bush  
Member of Congress

/s/

Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

/s/

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

/s/

David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

/s/

Emanuel Cleaver II  
Member of Congress

/s/

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

/s/

Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

/s/

Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
Member of Congress

/s/

Al Green  
Member of Congress

/s/

Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress

/s/

Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

/s/

Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

/s/

Hakeem Jeffries  
Member of Congress

/s/

Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/

Mondaire Jones  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

/s/

Brenda L. Lawrence  
Member of Congress

/s/

Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

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/s/  
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

/s/  
A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Gregory Meeks  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress