



For Immediate Release
August 19, 2019

LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Statement on Police Commissioner's Decision to Fire Pantaleo

Today, over five years after NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo killed Eric Garner with an illegal chokehold, Police Commissioner James O'Neill announced that Pantaleo has been fired from the Department.

“For five years Eric Garner’s family has waited for some measure of accountability for his death. Today’s decision to dismiss Pantaleo is long overdue. Nevertheless, we join Eric Garner’s family in expressing our appreciation that the NYPD has taken this important and fully warranted action,” said [Sherrilyn Ifill](#), President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF). “The recent release of findings by an Administrative Judge about Mr. Pantaleo’s dishonesty in reporting what occurred when he used an illegal chokehold on Mr. Garner only confirms what has been clear from the start: Daniel Pantaleo should not serve as a police officer.”

While this announcement is encouraging, this decision is not justice for Eric Garner or his family. Despite the [recommendation of lawyers](#) in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, the legal system failed to hold Officer Pantaleo or the other police officers involved accountable for this killing.

Two weeks ago, LDF filed a [FOIA](#) request to obtain documents from the U.S. Department of Justice that can shed additional light on the basis for Mr. Barr’s decision. It is still unclear why Attorney General Barr departed from that recommendation.

Additionally, it remains critical that we continue to push for [CRL 50-a](#) to be repealed. Under CRL 50-a, a New York police officer who has engaged in unjustified use of deadly force can continue their law enforcement career at another police department without their prior record being disclosed.

“True and lasting policing reform must include legal accountability for the unwarranted and unconstitutional killing of unarmed African Americans. While we are encouraged by Police Commissioner O’Neill’s decision, we are far from the institutional accountability needed to prevent a tragedy like this from happening again” said [Lumumba Akinwole-Bande](#), Director of Community Organizing at LDF.

###

Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization. LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

Follow LDF on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).