

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

July 28, 2015

The Honorable Loretta E. Lynch  
Attorney General of the United States  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Lynch,

As part of a growing national call for action, including most recently the President's efforts to reform the criminal justice system, I write to you to underscore the need to continue improving policing practices, particularly as they impact the Latino<sup>1</sup> community. There are too many instances in which Latinos have endured discrimination and abuse at the hands of law enforcement. However, we have seen promising examples of effective community policing across the country that is culturally competent and incorporates good public safety while building trust and a mutually beneficial relationship between law enforcement and the surrounding neighborhoods.

In recent months, frustration as a result of the deaths of young men following law enforcement actions has built to a nationwide call to continue improving how our law enforcement departments interact with minority communities. We must make sure that the Latino community is not left out of this discussion.

Transparency is critical to law enforcement accountability. Comprehensive data on police incidents is necessary for an informed public discussion on the use of excessive force by law enforcement in minority communities, particularly Latino communities, across the country. Increased data collection will help bring a better understanding of the Latino experience into ongoing legislative considerations for community policing programs and criminal justice reforms. It is in the spirit of transparency that I request your assistance in obtaining the following data from the Department of Justice (DOJ):

- The number of Latino deaths resulting from police interaction during the preceding 5 years;
- The ages of the victims involved;
- The immigration status of the victims;
- Identification of the federal, state and/or local law enforcement agency involved in each incident;
- A list of DOJ law enforcement agencies that exclude ethnicity as a recognized variable in data collection; and
- The number of complaints and corresponding investigations received by DOJ related to the deaths of Latinos as a result of contact with police.

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<sup>1</sup>The terms "Latino" and "Hispanic" are used interchangeably in this letter, following U.S. Census Bureau classification.

Increased incidence of Latino deaths with police are eroding community trust in law enforcement. The result has been a growing fear of police in Latino communities and unwillingness to report crime or cooperate during investigations. Compounding on growing mistrust are years of escalated efforts by federal and local law enforcement to target immigrants—the vast majority of whom are not criminals.

To date, policymakers have had to rely on community information and scant media accounts to piece together data about policing in the Latino community. However, a shortage of information does not mean an absence of strife. In recent years, communities in my home state of California, as well as many other parts of the country, have joined in protest against reports of unnecessary deaths of unarmed Latino men.

As our nation's debate on race and policing grows and develops into legislative and regulatory action, we must not ignore the Latino experience with policing practices. I trust that under your leadership there will be timely investigations of all policing incidents, including those involving Latinos and Latinas. I hope that increased data and transparency will show our communities that their voices are valued and relevant, and that we will continue to build a nation in which all of our children can grow up feeling safe, respected and trusted.


Thank you in advance for your attention to this request and I look forward to working with your department on this very important issue.


Sincerely,

  
TONY CÁRDENAS  
Member of Congress

  
LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ  
Member of Congress

  
RUBÉN HINOJOSA  
Member of Congress

  
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA  
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