



**National  
Urban League**

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**Empowering Communities.  
Changing Lives.**

May 25, 2021

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

Dear Attorney General Garland,

As you know, Ronald Greene was killed at the hands of Louisiana State Troopers on May 10, 2019. Two years later, justice has not yet been served. On behalf of the National Urban League and the Urban League of Louisiana, we ask that the Department of Justice ("Department") take quick, thorough, and decisive action in its investigation into the tragic death of Ronald Greene. Specifically, we ask that the Department investigate the state troopers' conduct through its vested authorities under the relevant civil rights laws. We also request a meeting to further discuss the current and systemic practices of the Louisiana State Police.

Under 18 USC §242 ("Section 242"), police officers are prohibited from willfully depriving any individual of their constitutional rights or subjecting the person to a different punishment based on race when performing law enforcement duties. This includes the deprivation of an individual's Fourth Amendment rights against unreasonable seizures through the use of excessive force.<sup>1</sup> Recently released body camera footage from the night of May 10, 2019 show state troopers repeatedly using a stun gun on Mr. Greene before he is able to exit his car and while he is face down on the ground, dragging him while his hands and legs are cuffed, punching him, placing him in a chokehold, and performing other violent acts.<sup>2</sup> We ask that, in light of the clear video evidence in this case, the Department bring criminal charges against the state troopers under its Section 242 authority.

Further, under 34 U.S.C. § 12601 ("Section 12601"), the Department has the authority to investigate law enforcement agencies to ensure they do not have a pattern or practice of violating people's constitutional rights. Here, after killing Mr. Greene, the Louisiana State Police sought to obscure the facts that led to his death and sought to shield itself from legal and public scrutiny. It is as if the Louisiana State Police deployed tactics from a model of self-preservation, compounding the dangerousness of their actions.

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<sup>1</sup> *U.S. v. Johnstone*, 107 F.3d 200 (3d Cir. 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Jim Mustian, *'I'm scared': AP obtains video of deadly arrest of Black man*, Associated Press, (May 19, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/ronald-greene-death-louisiana-eca021d8a54ec73598dd72b269826f7a>.



The Louisiana State Police issued a single page police report that fabricated what transpired during the incident.<sup>3</sup> It then took 474 days for local authorities to open an administrative investigation that has lacked transparency and internal accountability throughout.<sup>4</sup> The Louisiana State Police's behavior suggests a system that insulates a culture of police misconduct and is self-serving to the detriment of the people its officers and troopers have sworn to protect.

Based on these concerning acts, we would like to request a meeting with you to discuss the possibility of an investigation under Section 12601 to determine whether the Louisiana State Police has a pattern or practice of violating the civil rights of those persons within their jurisdiction.

Thank you for considering our request. For more information, please contact Joi Chaney, Senior Vice President for Policy and Advocacy (jchaney@nul.org) and Jerika Richardson, Senior Vice President for Equitable Justice and Strategic Initiatives (jrichardson@nul.org).

Respectfully,

Marc H. Morial  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Urban League

Judy Reese Morse  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Urban League of Louisiana

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<sup>3</sup> Dan Levin, Michael Levenson, *What We Know About Ronald Greene's Death*, The New York Times, (May 21, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/21/us/ronald-greene-video-louisiana.html>.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*