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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND, SETTLES CIVIL RIGHTS INVESTIGATION
WITH THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) will implement new and enhanced policies and procedures to ensure nondiscrimination in the way they provide police services, under an agreement reached today between Montgomery County, Maryland, the MCPD, the Montgomery County chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), and the Justice Department.

The agreement, which must first be ratified by the FOP membership, resolves a complaint filed with the Justice Department by the Montgomery County chapter of the NAACP alleging that Montgomery County police officers engaged in racially discriminatory treatment of African Americans, including, harassment, race-based traffic stops, failure to adequately investigate and monitor discrimination complaints filed by citizens, and use of excessive force. Today's agreement establishes enhanced guidelines for traffic enforcement, documentation of traffic stops, public outreach and public reporting, complaint procedures, supervision, and training for police officers and their supervisors.

"Today's agreement will result in better policing for Montgomery County," said Bill Lann Lee, Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. "I commend the county, the MCPD, and the FOP for their willingness to work together with us to resolve this matter."

The Justice Department's investigation, which began in December 1996, was conducted under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968. These statutes prohibit law enforcement agencies that receive federal funds from discriminating against minorities while conducting their law enforcement activities.

"This agreement is really groundbreaking. We've come to the negotiations from different perspectives - Montgomery County, the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, the Fraternal Order of Police and the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Maryland - and reached an agreement that serves the interests of all the citizens of

Montgomery County," added Lynne Battaglia, U.S. Attorney in Maryland.

As a result of the agreement, the County and the MCPD will:

- ensure that officers do not consider race or ethnicity when making traffic stops and initiating any post-stop actions, except in limited circumstances when an individual is identified in part by his or her race or ethnicity;
- document all traffic stops by recording the driver's race, ethnic origin, and gender, the reason for the stop and the nature of any post-stop actions;
- review computerized reports on stops and post-stop actions and take positive corrective measures, such as training or counseling, where appropriate;
- implement a new computer system to track all complaints and investigations;
- fully investigate and resolve complaint allegations in a timely and fair manner;
- establish a community outreach program with the FOP that will explain the duties and responsibilities of officers, dangers of the job, and methods for filing complaints or compliments;
- hire an expert to review and evaluate the current training program, and provide new and increased training for officers and supervisors; and,
- issue semiannual public reports providing traffic stop statistics by race and summary information on complaint investigations.

In addition, the parties will select an independent consultant to review and report on the county's implementation of, and assist with the county's compliance with, the agreement. The consultant will issue regular reports to the county, the police department, the FOP, and the Justice Department.

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