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Contact: Richard Relkin, rrelkin@jjay.cuny.edu; Allison Goldberg, agoldberg@jjay.cuny.edu

Institute for Innovation in Prosecution (IIP) Contributes to Congressional Black Caucus Hearing on Police Use-of-Force

Washington, D.C. – On Wednesday, May 22, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC)’s Police Accountability Taskforce will bring together advocates, law enforcement experts, and directly impacted family members for a forum to discuss the work of President Obama’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, the state of policing under President Trump, and new recommendations to improve law enforcement interactions with communities of color.

The prosecutor’s role in preventing and addressing use-of-force will be a principle focus of the hearing, and will be led by three members of the IIP’s Working Group on Officer-Involved Fatalities: Ronald L. Davis, Former Executive Director of the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing; Wanda Johnson, mother of Oscar Grant who was killed by police in 2009; and Stephanie Morales, Commonwealth’s Attorney of Portsmouth, Virginia.

Mr. Davis, Ms. Johnson, and CA Morales participated in a year-long Working Group, convened by the IIP at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, which analyzed how prosecutors can prevent use-of-force and provide a path to accountability for unjustified force. Their collaboration culminated in a Toolkit on the Prosecutor’s Role in Officer-Involved Fatalities, designed with actionable and adaptable steps for prosecutors to take and communities to advocate for. The recommendations outlined in the Toolkit will be discussed at the CBC hearing.

The hearing represents tangible change that IIP Working Group members are leading in the field, and a significant step towards progress as it raises awareness on the national level about the role of prosecutors in officer-involved fatalities. The insight of local leaders – a former police chief, a directly impacted family member, and an elected prosecutor – will guide our Congressional leadership about ways the federal government can support steps to reduce and address use-of-force. The hearing also uplifts the Working Group model as a way to develop policy based on the diverse expertise and experiences of those directly impacted by these tragedies.

The CBC Taskforce was established to address the crisis of unnecessary police violence and escalation, particularly against people of color, developing policy proposals to improve relationships between communities and the law enforcement officers sworn to protect them, and reduce the apparent racial bias in the outcomes of police encounters. The IIP is proud to partner with the CBC Taskforce on this important effort.

Further details on the hearing outlined below.
WHAT: CBC Police Accountability Task Force Hosts Police-Community Relations Forum

WHERE 2325 Rayburn House Office Building
(Committee on Science, Space and Technology)

WHEN Wednesday, May 22, 2019
2:30 to 4:30 PM

WHO Forum Panelists include:

Ronald L. Davis, Former Executive Director, President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Partner, 21CP Solutions;

Laurie Robinson, Former Co-Chair President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing, Clarence J. Robinson Professor of Criminology, Law and Society, George Mason University;

Stephanie Morales, Commonwealth Attorney, Portsmouth County, VA;

Cat Brooks, Co-founder of the Anti-Police Terror Project and Executive Director of the Justice Teams Network

Wanda Johnson, mother of Oscar Grant, whose death at the hands of police was depicted in the 2013 film Fruitvale Station