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Institute for Innovation in Prosecution (IIP) Contributes to
Statewide Working Group on Officer-Involved Fatalities

Minneapolis, MN – On August 17, the Institute for Innovation in Prosecution (IIP) participated in a statewide effort led by Minnesota public officials, law enforcement experts, and community members to prevent and address officer-involved fatalities. Convened by Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison and Department of Public Safety Commissioner John Harrington, the Minnesota Working Group on Police-Involved Deadly Encounters represents a first-of-its-kind statewide, collaborative effort to garner knowledge and present recommendations to improve system responses to officer use-of-force.

The MN working group includes a series of three hearings with testimony from diverse stakeholders. Testimony and recommendations from the hearings will be published in a final report to the state legislature by February 2020. Members of the IIP’s Working Group on Officer-Involved Fatalities (OIF) – including Ron Davis, Principal Consultant of 21st Century Policing Solutions, LLC, and former Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, US Department of Justice; and Clarence Castile, St. Paul (MN) Reserve Officer, and Uncle of Philando Castile – helped to coordinate the statewide efforts. Additionally, Valerie Castile, Founder of the Philando Castile Relief Foundation, and Mother of Philando Castile; John Choi, Ramsey County (MN) Attorney; Wanda Johnson, Founder of the Oscar Grant Foundation, and Mother of Oscar Grant; and Allison Goldberg, IIP Policy Advisor, provided testimony at the first hearing about their work and knowledge gathered from the IIP’s Working Group on OIF.

The IIP’s Working Group was a year-long process led by family members who lost loved ones to police violence; prosecutors; and law enforcement experts. That process culminated in A Toolkit for Prosecutors and Communities, by Prosecutors and Communities, a first-of-its kind resource with actionable and adaptable steps for prosecutors to take and communities to advocate for in order to prevent use-of-force and to provide a path towards accountability for unjustified force. The Toolkit is being used as a grounding document for the MN hearings.

The MN working group represents tangible progress on improving transparency and accountability around police use-of-force. For local public officials and system actors to proactively engage those directly impacted by police violence; community organizers advocating for system change; and those on law enforcement’s frontlines demonstrates a courageous step towards finding a solution to one of the most urgent and persistent challenges facing the country. The IIP applauds this important step, and looks forward to continue working with state, local, and community leaders to address officer-involved fatalities and critical incidents.