

CEDRIC L. RICHMOND
2ND DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

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COURTS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
THE INTERNET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1802

July 6, 2016

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The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

It is with great concern and tremendous urgency that I write to you today to request an investigation into the fatal shooting of Alton Sterling at the hands of officers of the Baton Rouge Police Department. Shortly after midnight on Tuesday, July 6, BRPD officers responded to an anonymous call that an individual was selling CDs outside of a North Baton Rouge store had pointed a gun at someone. Cell phone video captured by a witness at the scene shows two officers wrestling Mr. Sterling to the ground, seemingly restraining him, and then firing four to six shots fatally wounding Mr. Sterling. While both officers were equipped with body cameras, a BRPD spokesman says that both cameras came loose and thus were unable to record the incident from the officers' perspective. In addition to the cell phone video, the event was also captured by the store's surveillance system. However, that footage is currently unavailable to the public as BRPD confiscated both the surveillance video and the store's surveillance system.

The pain felt by Mr. Sterling's family is severe and the right of his community to have significant questions answered is pressing. In recent years there have been countless incidents which have shed light on the fact that many people feel they have been unfairly targeted by police. Above all, it is important to ensure that the facts are fully examined and that justice is served. The citizens of North Baton Rouge deserve a thorough and transparent investigation. The role our law enforcement officers fill is too important to the function of our society to allow this dynamic to go unchecked. It is incumbent upon us all to step in and intervene for the people we serve whenever it appears that their rights have been abridged in any way. There is perhaps no institution better suited to serve as that intervening force than the U.S. Department of Justice. For that reason, I am asking you to launch a full investigation into the shooting death of Alton Sterling to uncover what, if any, violations were committed by the officers involved.

I look forward to your prompt reply. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. L. Richmond", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

Cc: Attorney General Loretta Lynch