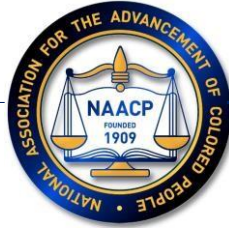


Tennessee State Conference of the NAACP
Gloria J. Sweet-Love, President



Immediate Release
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Tennessee—The Tennessee State Conference of the NAACP calls for investigation into the conduct of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, including the potential involvement of the Department of Justice.

The Tennessee State Conference of the NAACP (also called the Tennessee NAACP) is calling for an investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice into the potential misconduct of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department. A recent inquiry into police officer misconduct by the Nashville Community Oversight Board discovered that MNPB handed over altered video footage that may have been critical to the COB's investigation.

When the COB discovered the altered video, MNPB initially downplayed the incident. After pressure, MNPB reprimanded two civilian employees allegedly responsible for the video editing. It then announced an internal investigation of the incident.

Yet, an internal investigation is bias and lacks accountability. It fails to address the larger questions: How widespread is the practice of altering video footage in MNPB? Is MNPB altering video footage for purposes of thwarting COB investigations and civil rights complaints? And have altered videos been unfairly used in criminal investigations?

Answering these issues are important to public safety and to maintaining the trust and confidence between MNPB and over-policed communities. MNPB cannot investigate itself. An external review or inquiry by the Department of Justice is the next step to addressing alleged misconduct.

Our call for an external investigation is magnified considering the recently filed civil rights lawsuit by Ms. Jill Fitchard, the Executive Director of the COB, alleging harassment and retaliation by the Metro Nashville government. Among other things, she claims that Metro Nashville government officials may have monitored her work and private phones.

In 2020 the Silent No Longer organization, a group of MNPB personnel, also reported systemic patterns of sexual assault and harassment, gender discrimination, and retaliation. It is still unclear if the group's concerns were addressed.

We call on Mayor Cooper and the Metropolitan Nashville Council to invite the U.S. Department of Justice to Nashville for a top-to-bottom review of MNPB practices. Even though there have been some improvements in policing practices under Chief John Drake, overall, MNPB is still resistant to making significant changes in police accountability.

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