

Congresswoman Fudge sends letter to U.S. Justice Department for investigation by it, FBI in 137 bullets

Written by Kathy

Wednesday, 12 December 2012 06:38 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 December 2012 18:21



By Kathy Wray Coleman, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief, Cleveland Urban News. Com and The Cleveland Urban News.Com Blog, Ohio's Most Read Online Black Newspaper

WASHINGTON, D.C.-Ohio Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge (D-11) (pictured), a Warrensville Hts. Democrat and chairman-elect of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) whose majority Black 11th congressional district includes the east side of Cleveland, its eastern suburbs and a small pocket of Akron and staggering parts of its Summit County suburbs, has called for an independent investigation by the United States Department of Justice and the FBI around the 137-bullets- shooting deaths by a group of White Cleveland police officers two weeks ago of unarmed Black victims Malissa Russell and Timothy Ray Russell in a letter to U.S. Department

Written by Kathy

Wednesday, 12 December 2012 06:38 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 December 2012 18:21

of Justice officials dated Dec. 11. It is copied to Steven Dettlebach, the U.S. district attorney for the northern district of Ohio.

"I am writing to request that the special litigation unit of the United States Department of Justice promptly conduct a thorough and independent review of the facts and circumstances leading to the use of deadly force by Cleveland police officers on November 29, 2012 in East Cleveland, Oh.," wrote Fudge in a letter to Jonathan Smith, chief of the special litigation unit for the office of Civil Rights for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington D.C. "The high speed pursuit of the vehicle from the City of Cleveland culminated with officers firing 137 bullets at the driver and occupant of the vehicle, claiming the lives of both individuals, Malissa Williams and Timothy Russell. At this writing, no evidence has publicly surfaced that either Ms. Williams or Mr. Russell fired a weapon or had a firearm."

Fudge called the firing of 137 rounds of ammunition at Williams and Russell extreme and said also in the letter that "a pattern of unequal treatment exposes African-Americans to practices and policies by the Cleveland Police Department in egregious violation of their civil rights including the use of excessive force."

The congresswoman said in a press release last week to Cleveland Urban News.Com that she supports Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson (pictured in suit) in his call for an internal investigation and a review by the FBI and the U.S. district attorney's office, though community activists and the family members of the victims want more than a review by the FBI. They want the agency to lead, not monitor, the investigation. They argue that some East Cleveland police are former Cleveland police officers, that Russell and Williams will be denied due process and a fair assessment, and that it is ludicrous to think that East Cleveland police can separate themselves from the situation in investigating neighboring police officers relative to criminal allegations of deadly force.

Twelve of the Cleveland police officers involved in the deadly shooting are White, and one Hispanic. And Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, himself Black like the two gunned down victims, has appointed not one Black as law director, safety director, chief of police, chief city prosecutor or EMS commissioner in the predominantly Black major metropolitan city.

Jackson has previously said that he has no Blacks because his all non-Black law enforcement leadership team appointees are the best qualified, a statement that he may wish he had never spoken in defending his lack of diversity in a venue where the Black community is most

Written by Kathy

Wednesday, 12 December 2012 06:38 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 December 2012 18:21

vulnerable critics say.

A similar letter to Fudges' that calls for an independent investigation by federal authorities has been sent to the U.S. Department of Justice by Olivet Institutional Baptist Church senior pastor, the Rev. Dr. Jawanza Karriem Colvin.

Some 30 police cars, most from Cleveland and others allegedly from East Cleveland, were involved in a 25 minute police chase from in front of the Cuyahoga County Justice Center in Cleveland of the car Russell was driving with Williams as a passenger that went into East Cleveland near Heritage Middle School at Wymore and Terrace Avenues with police aggressively shooting 137 bullets into the car.

No gun or gun shell casings were found in or near the car at issue and no gun residue surfaced on the bodies of Williams or Russell, sources say. And neither was wanted by the law.

Community activists say that East Cleveland city officials and police should not be investigating Cleveland officials and police on the matter because it is nothing more than "the fox guarding the hen house."

Art McKoy (pictured), who leads Black on Black Crime Inc. and has held community protests over the deadly shootings, said that the Black community is naive if it tolerates police investigating each other in such a high profile deadly force case.

"East Cleveland police should not be leading any investigation," said McKoy. "We want an official FBI investigation led by the FBI and in the absence of police initiatives in Cleveland, East Cleveland or anywhere else."

A community forum on the unprecedented shootings held last week at Greater Abyssinia Baptist Church in Cleveland and sponsored by Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson and the Cleveland Chapter NAACP got heated. Another forum, also sponsored by the Cleveland Chapter NAACP, is scheduled for 6 pm on Friday, Dec., 14 at the Shaw High School Main Auditorium in East Cleveland. To reach the offices of the Cleveland NAACP by phone call 216-231-6260.

Congresswoman Fudge sends letter to U.S. Justice Department for investigation by it, FBI in 137 bullets c

Written by Kathy

Wednesday, 12 December 2012 06:38 - Last Updated Wednesday, 12 December 2012 18:21

Reach Cleveland Urban News.Com by email at editor@clevelandurbannews.com and by phone at 216-659-0473.