

Written by Kathy  
Monday, 24 April 2023 22:57

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**Pictured are Ohio 13th Congressional District Congresswoman Emilia Sykes of Akron, □  
Akron police shooting victim Jayland Walker, and U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland**

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Staff article

WASHINGTON, D.C.- Ohio 13th Congressional District Congresswoman Emilia Sykes, an Akron Democrat and one of three Black women in the U.S. House of Representatives from Ohio, has officially requested a Department of Justice investigation into the patterns and practices of the Akron Police Department. The request from the federal lawmaker comes hardly a week after a Summit County grand jury refused to indict eight Akron cops who gunned down 25-year old Jayland Walker shooting 94 bullets as he ran away from police on foot.

"I write today on behalf of the people of Ohio's 13th congressional district urging the United States Department of Justice to investigate the death of Mr. Jayland Walker, a young Black man killed by eight officers employed by the Akron Police Department on June 27, 2022," wrote Rep. Sykes in a letter on Monday to U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland.

The letter goes on to say that "I request that the Department of Justice (DOJ) use its authority pursuant to 34 U.S.C. § 12601 (formerly codified at 42 U.S.C. § 14141) to initiate an investigation into the patterns and practices of the Akron Police Department (APD) in order to enhance public safety and the community's trust in our sworn officers."

A trained attorney herself and former minority leader of the Ohio House of Representatives who won a seat in Congress via the midterm elections, Sykes, 37, is the youngest of Ohio's five-member Democratic Congressional Delegation, which also includes U.S. Reps. Joyce

## U.S. Rep. Emilia Sykes officially urges the DOJ to investigate Akron's police department after a no indictment

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Beatty of Columbus, Marcy Kaptur of Toledo, and Shontel Brown of Warrensville Hts., and U.S. Sen Sherrod Brown of Cleveland But she is no less assertive and said also in her letter to Garland that he needs to step in to make sure that what happened to Jayland Walker does not happen to others.

"I am confident you share our ultimate objective of ensuring that the citizens of our nation have confidence in their law enforcement agencies and that you will facilitate solutions-based tools and practices necessary to keep law enforcement safe and accountable and protect our communities so that we never have to be in this situation again," the congresswoman's letter reads.

Sykes told the attorney general in her letter that the office of the DOJ has investigated numerous police departments across the country and that "the gravity of recent events regarding Jayland Walker has shown it is past time for an independent third party to facilitate a discussion to help mediate disputes and place the community on a path to reconciliation and healing."

A largely White, majority female county grand jury issued what is called a no bill last Monday after determining that the shooting death was justified and that an indictment on criminal charges was not warranted. The tragic killing by police of the young Black man from Akron who had no criminal record has drawn national attention to the city of roughly 200,000 residents that is some 30 miles southeast of Cleveland and the hometown of NBA megastar and Los Angeles Laker LeBron James.

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The police shooting incident in question occurred following a car and foot chase and traffic stop in June of 2022. No gun was found on Walker's person but police say they later found a gun in his car, and that he allegedly shot at them before jumping out of the car and taking off on foot.

Rep Sykes gave an emotional presentation at a press conference held last week by the Walker family and their attorneys, and community leaders and activists. She called for calm and branded the grand jury decision unjust and routine for Black America. And she questioned how Walker could be gunned down execution style while running away from the police and without any weapon and not one of the involved cops is criminally prosecuted.

"We've seen this time and time again and now it's in our community of Akron," the congresswoman said at last week's televised press conference.

Though controversial, last week's grand jury decision has not caused the racial unrest that followed Walker's shooting death last summer. Akron Public Schools, however, were closed the day after the county grand jury chose not to indict police and so were classes at University of Akron. Also, six people were arrested in a protest after the grand jury decision, the first of several protests held in Akron by activists, who also convinced a judge to issue a temporary order precluding lethal force after they sued for being tear gassed and pepper sprayed for picketing.

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Here's what police and city officials say led up to the police shooting death of Jayland Walker, much of it at odds with what attorneys for the Walker family say allegedly happened

**According to the Akron Police Department, at about 12:30 a.m. on June 27, police in Akron attempted to stop Walker for an unspecified traffic violation. Walker did not stop and a chase ensued. The pursuing officers say gunfire came from the vehicle less than a minute into the chase. After several minutes, Walker exited the highway and the chase continued along city streets.**

**Eventually, Walker's car slowed down, and while the car was still moving, Walker exited from the passenger's side, wearing a ski mask, and ran towards a nearby parking lot. Officers chased Walker and attempted to stop him with a stun gun but were not successful. After about ten seconds of chasing Walker, eight police officers opened fire for six or seven seconds, shooting approximately 94 rounds. Police said that it appeared Walker was turning towards them, and they believed he was armed and "moving into a firing position, a claim the Walker family attorneys dispute.**

**Following the shooting, Walker was put in handcuffs by police and was found with his hands cuffed behind his back when EMTs arrived on the scene. According to police, officers attempted to administer first aid to Walker after he was shot Walker was**

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**pronounced dead at the scene. Police claim that a wedding band was found in Walker's car and that Walker may have been acting erratically because he had just lost his fiance in an unrelated car accident. Community activists and the Walker family attorneys dispute such assertions and contend that they are nothing but a cover up for a police shooting gone wrong, and that the entire scenario is indicative of a lack of police training and excessive force.**

**The medical examiner observed 60 wounds on Walker's body, with some uncertainty based on entrance and exit wounds. No firearm was found on Walker's body. The Summit County Medical Examiner's Office ruled Walker's death a homicide.**

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We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview,

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