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August 1, 2025  
VIA MAIL AND EMAIL

Chief Tina Goncalves  
Pawtucket Police Department  
121 Roosevelt Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Pawtucket City Council  
City Hall  
137 Roosevelt Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Dear Chief Goncalves and City Council Members:

A few weeks ago, you received a copy of a letter that the ACLU of Rhode Island sent the Attorney General regarding the June 8<sup>th</sup> shooting of resident Sebastian Yidana by Pawtucket police officer Thomas Letourneau. As it remained unclear to us whether the police department had provided the public the entirety of the body worn camera (BWC) footage that had been recorded by officers at the scene, and particularly that of officer Letourneau, a major component of that letter was a request that the AG release all the footage of that incident that he had received from the City.

The Attorney General's office has now confirmed to us that it has no more footage than what was already publicly released by the City. Because this fact raises very serious questions, I am writing to reiterate the concerns I raised in that letter and ask you to address them.

Our major concern can be summarized simply: the released recordings inexplicably document only what happened after the shooting had already taken place. It is inexplicable because of the technical functionality of the cameras. Chief Goncalves' explanation for the lack of BWC footage of the shooting is that officer Letourneau had failed to timely activate his camera, which was in "off-duty mode." But this explanation is incomplete. The shooting should nonetheless have been captured on his camera because *the department's BWC system is specifically set up to automatically activate when an officer's firearm is removed from its holster, regardless of whether the camera is already activated.*

In addition, as our letter to the Attorney General noted, the department's BWCs are also equipped with "pre-event buffering capabilities" *that automatically save thirty seconds of video – but not audio – footage prior to activation of a BWC.* But the recording of officer Letourneau's BWC begins with both audio and video playing, which suggests the redaction of at least a half-minute of the officer's recording.

There may be technical explanations for these missing recordings, but if so, nobody in the City has attempted to provide them to the public. Our concerns are only heightened by

the apparent failure of any supervisory police personnel to ensure that officer Letourneau filed a written report about the shooting, an obvious and fundamental protocol step in any police use of force incident, and one also mandated by departmental policy. Yet here too, no concern has been publicly expressed about this perplexing lapse in basic police procedure.

In light of the Pawtucket Police Department's well-documented and dubious reputation when it comes to police shooting of civilians over the course of many years, this nonchalance is extraordinarily alarming. As our letter to the Attorney General pointed out, one would expect that, of all police departments in the state, Pawtucket would be the one most concerned about ensuring strict compliance with all policies governing the discharge of weapons by its officers.

The passage of time has not shed any additional light on the reasons for the seemingly missing footage and the absence of a contemporaneously submitted written report from officer Letourneau. The public deserves an explanation for them. We believe that, in your respective roles as police chief and ultimate overseers of the police department with investigatory powers, you have both the ability and responsibility to provide that explanation. We urge you to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Brown", with a stylized, flowing script.

Steven Brown  
Executive Director

cc: The Hon. Donald Grebien