

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 18, 2024

Brent Cohen
Acting Assistant Attorney General
Office of the Assistant Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
999 N. Capitol St. NE
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Acting Assistant Attorney General Cohen:

We are writing to urge the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime to ensure resources and supports are made available to people impacted by police brutality. Numerous victims and families have alerted us to the challenges they face in securing assistance after enduring abuse at the hands of law enforcement. This issue impacts individuals at the local, state, and federal levels and requires your immediate attention.

Police brutality remains a persistent problem in the United States. Annually, more than 1,100 people are killed by police and thousands more are injured. Black people, in particular, are 2.5 times more likely to be murdered by police compared to their white counterparts. This issue was the central focus of the 2020 global racial justice movement that led to the largest protests in the history of the United States. Although the news headlines may have faded, the pain experienced by victims' families and communities remains.

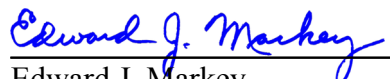
Survivors of police violence and their families deserve and require tailored support from the Office for Victims of Crime. It is incumbent upon your agency to ensure that victims of all crimes, including those affected by excessive use of force, have the resources needed to set them on a pathway to healing. Currently, barriers in the administration of the Crime Victims Fund impede access to such help. For example, some jurisdictions require victims of police misconduct to cooperate with and request aid from the same law enforcement department responsible for their harm. Furthermore, victims are often unaware of when or how to access assistance, including counseling and support services.

We urge you to promptly issue public guidance to all federal, state, and local administrators of the Crime Victims Fund that clarifies and improves access to supports and resources for individuals and families hurt by police brutality.

Sincerely,



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator