

*Patrolmen's
Benevolent
Association*
Of The City Of New York, Incorporated



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 23, 2015

VIA U.S. MAIL

The Honorable Eric Holder
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I write to call your attention to the involvement of the Bronx Defenders, a legal aid organization that receives a portion of its funding from U.S. Department of Justice grants, in the production of a deeply disturbing music video promoting the murder of police officers. The PBA believes that this appalling conduct by a publicly-funded entity warrants immediate action by the Department of Justice.

The video, which is titled "Hands Up" and principally features an individual who calls himself "Uncle Murda," includes multiple depictions of guns being held to a police officer's head and includes lyrics repeatedly calling for the murder of police officers ("a cop got to get killed"). The video first appeared online in early December 2014, only a few weeks before the assassination of Police Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu by a gunman whose online threats against police officers bore a striking similarity to the language used in the video.

The video also features at least two individuals who appear to be Bronx Defenders attorneys and includes scenes that appear to have been filmed inside the organization's offices. The Bronx Defenders logo and contact information are also featured prominently in multiple scenes. Following media reports on the video, the Bronx Defenders issued a statement acknowledging its involvement but disavowing any prior knowledge of the images and language promoting the murder of police officers. That statement was apparently removed from the organization's website in the days following the assassination of Police Officers Ramos and Liu.

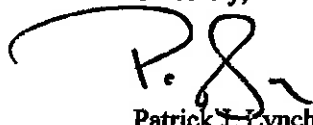
According to federal spending data, the Bronx Defenders has received \$1.5 million in Department of Justice grants since 2009 under grant programs named for slain New York City police officer Edward Byrne, a fact that we find disgraceful to P.O. Byrne's memory and to the programs named in his honor. The PBA is conducting an investigation to determine the nature and extent of the involvement of the Bronx Defenders and its employees in creating the "Hands Up" video, and we plan to share the results of that investigation with local and federal government officials and with the public. However, based on the organization's admission of involvement and video's content alone, one fact is already clear: U.S.

taxpayers are funding an organization that has lent its name and resources to an effort that encourages the murder of police officers.

The Bronx Defenders' role in spreading this dangerous message must not pass without a complete investigation and appropriate action by any governmental organization that plays a role in appropriating funds to this organization or that collaborates with it in any way. I urge you to use the full powers of the Department of Justice to ensure that the organization and every individual who participated in this project is held accountable. Not a single additional cent of federal money should support the parties who played a role in this video.

As Mayor de Blasio recently stated, any suggestion of violence against police officers is indeed "sick." But the language and images contained in the "Hands Up" video surpass even that standard: they do not only "suggest violence," but bluntly direct the viewer to murder a police officer. As the recent attacks on police officers in New York and elsewhere have demonstrated, there are numerous individuals who are willing and to able act on such directives. Allowing this inciting speech to continue unchecked puts police officers and members of the public at risk. Allowing it to be subsidized with public funds would constitute a violation of the public's trust.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Lynch
President

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OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

January 23, 2015

VIA HAND DELIVERY

The Honorable Bill de Blasio
Mayor of the City of New York
City Hall
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Melissa Mark-Viverito
Speaker of the New York City Council
250 Broadway, Suite 1856
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Scott Stringer
Comptroller of the City of New York
One Centre Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Speaker Mark-Viverito and Comptroller Stringer:

I write to call your attention to the involvement of the Bronx Defenders, a legal aid organization that is largely funded through contracts with the City, in the production of a deeply disturbing music video promoting the murder of police officers. The PBA believes that this appalling conduct by a publicly-funded entity warrants immediate action by the City administration and the City Council.

The video, which is titled "Hands Up" and principally features an individual who calls himself "Uncle Murda," includes multiple depictions of guns being held to a police officer's head and includes lyrics repeatedly calling for the murder of police officers ("a cop got to get killed"). The video first appeared online in early December 2014, only a few weeks before the assassination of Police Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu by a gunman whose online threats against police officers bore a striking similarity to the language used in the video.

The video also features at least two individuals who appear to be Bronx Defenders attorneys and includes scenes that appear to have been filmed inside the organization's offices. The Bronx Defenders logo and contact information are also featured prominently in multiple scenes. Following media reports on the video, the Bronx Defenders issued a statement acknowledging its involvement but disavowing any prior knowledge of the images and language promoting the murder of police officers. That statement was

apparently removed from the organization's website in the days following the assassination of Police Officers Ramos and Liu.

According to data from the Office of the Comptroller, the Bronx Defenders was awarded City contracts in excess of \$41 million during the past two fiscal years. The PBA is conducting an investigation to determine the nature and extent of the involvement of the Bronx Defenders and its employees in creating the "Hands Up" video, and we plan to share the results of that investigation with the City and with the public. However, based on the organization's admission of involvement and video's content alone, one fact is already clear: New York City taxpayers are funding an organization that has lent its name and resources to an effort that encourages the murder of police officers.

The Bronx Defenders' role in spreading this dangerous message must not pass without a complete investigation and appropriate action by any governmental organization that plays a role in appropriating funds to this organization or that collaborates with it in any way. I urge you to use the full powers of the City administration and the City Council to ensure that the organization and every individual who participated in this project is held accountable. Not a single additional cent of City money should support the parties who played a role in this video.

As Mayor de Blasio recently stated, any suggestion of violence against police officers is indeed "sick." But the language and images contained in the "Hands Up" video surpass even that standard: they do not only "suggest violence," but bluntly direct the viewer to murder a police officer. As the recent attacks on police officers in New York and elsewhere have demonstrated, there are numerous individuals who are willing and to able act on such directives. Allowing this inciting speech to continue unchecked puts police officers and all New Yorkers at risk. Allowing it to be subsidized with public funds would constitute a violation of the public's trust.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Lynch
President