

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April, 16th 2024

Representative Jim Jordan
2056 Rayburn House Office Building
45 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Jerry Nadler
2132 Rayburn House Office Building
45 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Jordan and Ranking Member Nadler,

We are writing to request that you hold a hearing to investigate the Hennepin County Attorney's office in Minnesota. Specifically, we request that you investigate the charges that have been brought against Minnesota State Trooper Ryan Londregan.

Trooper Londregan is being charged with second-degree unintentional murder, first-degree assault, and second-degree manslaughter for using deadly force in the line of duty. Trooper Londregan and Trooper Brett Seide pulled over Ricky Cobb II for a routine traffic violation. Upon running Mr. Cobb's information, they found that he was wanted for violating a no-contact order in a domestic case. They repeatedly requested that Mr. Cobb step out of the vehicle and eventually attempted to physically remove him from the vehicle. At this time, Mr. Cobb accelerated the vehicle, dragging both troopers several feet. It was at this time that Trooper Londregan discharged his weapon.

In September of 2023, Mary Moriarty, the Hennepin County Attorney responsible for bringing these charges, stated, "We have already identified a use-of-force expert – the type of expert who examines evidence in nearly every case where an officer uses force. Their independent review is a critical part of our process. We selected this expert even before we received the completed investigation so that we could move forward with our work immediately upon receipt of the file." However, when Ms. Moriarty officially filed the charges in January, there was no mention of a use-of-force expert's opinion. When asked about the omission of this expert testimony, Ms. Moriarty stated, "We were able to determine that charges were appropriate without the use of an expert."

However, it has now come to light that the prosecution's own expert use-of-force expert told the Hennepin County Attorney's Office that Trooper Londregan was justified in using force before they filed their charges. Expert witness Jeffery Noble reportedly told seven members of the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, "A reasonable officer in Trooper Londregan's position would have perceived that Trooper [Brett] Seide was in danger of death or great bodily harm, specifically from being dragged by the vehicle as it continued to accelerate."

Furthermore, Sergeant Jason Halvorson, the coordinator for the Minnesota State Patrol Training and Development Section, has submitted a declaration claiming that the County Attorney's office distorted his interview regarding use-of-force training. Sergeant Halvorson was interviewed as part of the criminal complaint compiled against Trooper Londregan. After reviewing the way that his answers were used in the criminal complaint, Sergeant Halvorson said, "The author of the complaint has cherry-picked one sentence from a 37-page interview transcript and excluded critical facts and context, thereby purposefully misleading the reader of the complaint."

Sergeant Halvorson was one of six witnesses who testified in front of the grand jury. Presently, five of the six witnesses to the grand jury have now released public declarations that they believe Trooper Londregan acted lawfully and in accordance with his training. These witnesses include the two other troopers who were present at the scene of the incident, as well as State Patrol use of force trainers. The only grand jury witness who has not yet made a public declaration is an investigator from Minnesota's Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA). This witness had no firsthand knowledge of the incident and was never a member of the Minnesota State Patrol.

The Federal government has demonstrated its willingness to involve itself in Hennepin County's justice system in the past. Last year the Department of Justice published a report after carrying out an investigation of the Minneapolis Police Department, located in the same county. The developments of this case are concerning and point to a deliberate attempt to use the Hennepin County Attorney's Office to target members of the law enforcement community. We believe that this is a flagrant example of a problem that your committee has been committed to exposing this Congress: the weaponization of government. We respectfully ask that your committee hold a hearing to examine this issue further.

Respectfully,



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Brad Finstad
Member of Congress