



U.S. Department of Justice

Loretta E. Lynch

United States Attorney

Eastern District of New York

271 Cadman Plaza East

Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

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Contact:

Robert Nardoza

United States Attorney's Office

(718) 254-6323

PRESS RELEASE

**UNITED STATES AGREES TO COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT TO RESOLVE ITS
INVESTIGATION OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR
DISCRIMINATORY POLICING AGAINST LATINOS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. and BROOKLYN, NEW YORK – The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York today announced that they have tentatively agreed to a settlement with the Suffolk County Police Department which calls for SCPD to implement new and enhanced policies and procedures to ensure nondiscrimination in the provision of police services to Latino communities in Suffolk County. The agreement, which the Department of Justice has agreed to, requires approval of the Suffolk County Legislature before it will be formally executed by the parties.

The United States commenced an investigation of SCPD in 2009 in the wake of the killing of Marcelo Lucero, an Ecuadorian national who was murdered by a group of teenagers in Patchogue, New York, as he was walking home on the evening November 8, 2008. The United States' investigation, pursuant to the Violent Crime and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 42 U.S.C. § 14141, and the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, 42 U.S.C. § 3789d, focused on discriminatory policing allegations, including claims that SCPD discouraged Latino victims from filing complaints and cooperating with the police and failed to investigate crimes and hate-crime incidents involving Latinos. The United States issued a Technical Assistance letter on September 13, 2011, which recommended a wide range of reforms to improve policing by the SCPD, focused particularly on promoting trust between SCPD and the Latino community. The County cooperated with the United States' investigation, and has already instituted a number of the recommendations from the Technical Assistance letter. The agreement announced today memorializes those recommendations and commits SCPD to significant changes in how it engages the Latino community.

Specifically, the agreement calls for SCPD to ensure that it polices equitably, respectfully, and free of unlawful bias. Other highlights include enhanced training and investigation of allegations of hate crimes and bias incidents, meaningful access to police services for individuals

with limited English proficiency (LEP), strengthening of SCPD's outreach efforts in Latino communities, and developing and maintaining a true Community Oriented Policing Enforcement (COPE) program throughout the county. The United States will monitor compliance with the agreement, which terminates only when SCPD has substantially complied with all of the requirements of the agreement for at least one year.

Loretta E. Lynch, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York stated, "All residents of Suffolk County deserve full and unbiased police protection, regardless of national origin, race, or citizenship status. When people feel they cannot turn to the police for protection, they have lost one of our most basic rights – the right to feel safe in one's community. Law enforcement also suffers when it does not hear from everyone under its umbrella of protection. I commend Suffolk County and SCPD for its cooperation with the United States' investigation and its willingness to ensure fairness and equal treatment for all."

The case was handled by AUSA Michael J. Goldberger, Chief of Civil Rights in the Civil Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office; Laura Coon, Special Litigation Counsel in the Special Litigation Section of the Civil Rights Division; and Silvia Dominguez and Jack Morse, Trial Attorneys in the Special Litigation Section.