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New Jersey State
Policemen's Benevolent Association, Inc.
158 Main Street Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095

November 26, 2014

The Honorable Frank Pallone
United States Representative
504 Broadway
Long Branch, NJ 07740

Dear Congressman Pallone:

On behalf of the 33,000 member New Jersey State Policemen's Benevolent Association I am writing to express my deep disappointment with your statement following the Grand Jury decision not to indict Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson.

As a long time supporter of the State PBA and its members, I would have hoped that you'd take a closer look into this situation rather than pile onto the sensationalism that has distracted from the facts of this incident. As an attorney I know you are aware of the process that a Grand Jury must go through in order to return an indictment. To suggest, as your official statement does, that their decision is a "failure of justice" is inappropriate. You were not present for their deliberations, did not review the witness statements and physical evidence and could not cross examine Officer Wilson to draw such a conclusion in this case.

I am sincerely concerned that your statement fans the flames of anti-law enforcement sentiment that distracts from the work our members do every day across New Jersey. No law enforcement officer wants to shoot a suspect. It is a last resort and something that they must live with every day. But it is a risk that comes with the authority of their position and when confronted with a life or death decision, as was evident in this case, an officer must be permitted to defend himself and the public from harm from an attacker. In your statement you comment that "the principle of 'Equal Justice under Law' must apply to all Americans. It must also apply to Officer Wilson and to the process established by our Constitution and our laws to ensure that he is also considered innocent before proven guilty.

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On behalf of all of our members, I would request that you take a measured approach in this matter moving forward and take a closer look at the evidence provided to the Grand Jury. But more importantly, I would ask that should the time come that a New Jersey police officer must take a life that you consider what that officer must be experiencing at that time and get all the facts before making a statement calling their serious action into question.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns. As always, do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Colligan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Pat Colligan
State President