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October 20, 2008

Governor Jon S. Corzine
State of New Jersey
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625

Sent via facsimile: 609-777-2922

Dear Governor Corzine:

I am writing to request a meeting to discuss policing reforms in New Jersey. I know you are deeply committed to best police practices, as evidenced by your sponsorship of the End Racial Profiling Act in the Senate, your formation of the Advisory Committee on Police Standards to evaluate options for ensuring accountability of both State Police and the more than 500 local departments, and by your recent establishment of a task force to look into the issue of police suicides. I thank you for this commitment.

However, I remain concerned by the lack of progress in implementing the tenets embodied in ERPA in New Jersey or the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Police Standards.

Improving police practices does not need to be complicated. We can draw from our own experience in New Jersey as well as those of cities and states across the country that have turned troubled departments around and transformed good departments into great ones. I sympathize with the fact that money is a paramount concern in our state, but many of the reforms we seek are not costly, particularly when balanced against the costs of litigation or loss of life.

I have met with Attorney General Milgram and her deputies on several occasions to recommend changes to improve state and local policing policies. To date, there has been no progress; reform thus far has been only talk and no action.

I have enclosed a list of recommendations that we will present in front of your Newark offices at a march we are hosting on Wednesday, October 22, International Day Against Police Brutality. Joining us at this march will be victims of police abuse in New Jersey, ranging from 13-year old Tony Ivey Jr., who was recently mistreated at the hands of the Newark Police Department when he, his Pop Warner football coach and another player were pulled over for no reason, roughed up and threatened with guns, to Herb Morton, a Continental Airlines Captain who was racially profiled on the Turnpike. Thankfully neither Tony nor Herb suffered physical injuries, but their stories reveal the devastating effects of any degree of police brutality.

I hope that you will consider meeting with me. No other organization in the State has worked more aggressively for professionalism and best practices in policing and defended victims of rogue officers. We would like to meet with you to continue and expand this discussion.

Sincerely,

DEBORAH JACOBS
Executive Director