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September 23, 2017

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Clayton, MO 63105

Mayor Jim Thomson  
The City of Richmond Heights  
1330 S. Big Bend Blvd.  
Richmond Heights, MO 63117

Dear County Executive Stenger, Mayor Thomson and Chief Belmar:

Emotions are running high in the St. Louis region. We know that tensions have escalated across the city since a judge found Jason Stockley not guilty in the killing of Anthony Lamar Smith.

We know that, yet again, the nation watches St. Louis. This is a unique time in our region. In order to move forward, we must learn from the lessons of our past. That means we must continue to allow nonviolent, robust freedom of speech. We must allow the community to continue to express its outrage, pain, and grief.

Today, we've seen images of what appears to be unnecessary use of force by police at the St. Louis Galleria, such as tackling people to the ground, and arresting them in ways that cause bodily injury.

It's imperative you remind law enforcement:

- To not use force against protesters absent a real and immediate threat of physical harm to others.
- To not use chemical agents, such as pepper spray and tear gas, without following the proper protocols to ensure the protection of Constitutional rights.
- Officers' nametags should be visible at all times for police accountability.
- To wear their body cameras and have them turned on at all times.
- People have a First Amendment right to take photos or film video of police activity in public spaces.

We hope that you will take responsibility to guarantee the rights of all people.

If you fail to do so, we will explore all legal options to make sure the Constitutional rights of the people are protected and respected.

Sincerely,

Anthony Rothert  
Legal Director  
ACLU of Missouri





