

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

7TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

February 23, 2017

The Honorable James P. O'Neill
Police Commissioner, City of New York
1 Police Plaza
New York, NY 10007

The Honorable Eric Gonzalez
Acting District Attorney
350 Jay Street, 16th Floor
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Dear Commissioner O'Neill and Acting District Attorney Gonzalez:

I am writing to express my concern over the death of Sergio Reyes, who was killed this past weekend at the hands of New York City Police Department (NYPD) officers. Mr. Reyes, being chased by officers from the 83rd Precinct, was shot with 14 bullets after fleeing a grocery store where he pulled a realistic-looking pellet gun in an attempted robbery.

According to reports, Mr. Reyes was shot in his heart, lungs, aorta, spinal cord, liver, stomach and bones. Sergio died from his injuries. From a third party standpoint, these wounds are extremely alarming. It can be argued that Mr. Reyes, sustaining one injury in any of these locations could have been apprehended and taken immediately to a local hospital for medical treatment—which could have potentially saved his life. While all the facts have not yet been made fully public, there are questions in the community about when Mr. Reyes was effectively incapacitated from his injuries and whether he could have been apprehended, taken to a local hospital for medical treatment and potentially survived.

Given the egregious nature of Sergio's injuries, I am requesting that both the NYPD and the District Attorney's (DA) office investigate this incident. In addition to this investigation, I request that both your offices conduct an evaluation of the following:

- The overall effectiveness of new or revised "use of force" policies (implemented in June 2016), specifically with de-escalation mechanisms and the metrics that define the "objectively reasonable standard;"
- The current de-escalation techniques which are consistent with the current NYPD Patrol Guide.
- The criteria established by the Force Investigations Division to determine whether an officer has acted negligently in breaking with force/restraint and firearm prohibitions;
- The total number of training hours, including the specific conditions and scenarios, NYPD officers receive when it comes to practicing de-escalation mechanisms and restraint of force; and
- An examination of potentially successful strategies, including professional development or continuing education to prevent further instances of disproportionate use of force.

I look forward to your responses and working collaboratively to ensure that our communities are safe and able to interact with the police officers that serve and protect them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nydia M. Velázquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nydia" and the last name "Velázquez" clearly legible.

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

cc: Deputy Inspector Sergio Centa, Commanding Officer, 83rd Precinct, Brooklyn