

COAL COALITION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LEADERS

For Immediate Release

OH, THE BLACK CAUCUS

Chicago, Illinois December 14, 2015 -

A word of caution to the members of the City Council's Black Caucus: although we can believe that you now feel that you were misled or lied to by the Mayor's Corporation Counsel, we do not buy that you thought you were saving the residents of Chicago tax dollars by approving the \$5 million payout to the McDonald family (in lieu of a larger payout down the line).



Why?

Because **1)** not one of you touted saving us several million dollars at the time you were also burdening us with property tax increases and doubling down on us paying for garbage collection, **2)** you all have lived in Chicago long enough to know that something must be up if the City is volunteering to pay a family that much for someone killed by a Chicago cop even before said family has bought suit against the City, **3)** no matter what argument the Corporation Council used, it would have raised more questions that would have led to uncovering the magnitude of this egregious act, and **4)** many of you have previously approved almost half a billion in payments to individuals and families related to the use of excessive force and other illegal tactics by the CPD without raising red flags and seriously pushing for reform.

So here is what we advise:

Stand up as the elected representatives that you are, as the men and women that you are and simply state that you did with this, as you have with other requests from the Mayor's Office - you simply went along without question. The difference is that you now realize the ramifications of 'just going along' and how bad a practice it is to abdicate your responsibilities, whether you are a Rahm supporter or not.

Simply admit it and then honestly commit to making a real change in how you operate individually and as a caucus. Commit to finding ways to grow your courage and internal fortitude and develop political strategies to leverage coalitions to better serve your constituents.

And here is what we recommend:

Prove your new found commitment to holding yourselves accountable by **1)** calling for the resignation of the Corporate Counsel who lied and/or misled you as you've stated, **2)** join the call for an independent investigation into a possible City Hall cover-up of the killing of LaQuan McDonald, and **3)** begin to work directly with community organizations that have spent years researching and developing recommendations for improving policing in Chicago

and implementing true community oversight of policing, **4)** Develop a process to better inform yourselves and the community on issues of import in a far more timely manner.

And Finally:

Let us be perfectly clear, the approval of the \$5 million payment without asking substantive questions and calling for a viewing of the video or even informing the community of this is not just a problem for the Black Caucus, or the Hispanic Caucus or the Progressive Caucus - **it is a problem for all 50 aldermen who shirked their responsibility to the residents of this City and their obligation to represent our best interests.** All aldermen, even those of the northwest side where many CPD officers live, have shirked their duty and placed politics above the safety of their communities whether they understand this or not.

City Council, be forewarned, as we the residents of Chicago awake ourselves, so shall we awake you.

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*The Coalition of African American Leaders (COAL) believes that it is important to examine the critical issues confronting the African American community where injustice, inequality and the absence of access and opportunity continue to prevail, thereby negatively impacting us as a people. C.O.A.L. is an assemblage that advocates and organizes for appropriate and responsible public policy change, system behavior change and equality of opportunity. We aim to achieve for **all** of **our** people the fullness of the life experience without any form of racism or exclusion as a deterrent. We believe we must prepare ourselves for the opportunity of this full participation, thereby achieving the necessary education and training to participate.*