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March 25, 2012

The Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General of the United States
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

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Dear Attorney General Holder:

This letter is sent to you on behalf of the Black Women's Agenda (BWA) and the two million women nationally and internationally for whom we advocate and seek to serve. BWA was founded in 1977 to recognize and articulate as stated in our mission "Advance, Secure, and Protect the Rights of Black Women and Their Families."

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The shooting death of Trayvon Martin was tragic for many reasons. The tragedy began when someone assumed that a young black male should not be allowed to walk freely in a neighborhood. A "Stand-Your-Ground" law that should be repealed exacerbated the tragedy by allowing someone to believe they have the right to challenge and in this case murder an unarmed young person and claim self-defense. This tragedy has been further punctuated by the delayed legal handling of the case that appears to be a deliberate procrastination.

Though all of the details of the case have not been revealed and explained, this case is personal and reminds us of the

* Emeritus



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young 14-year-old Emmitt Till's mutilation and murder for being accused of flirting with a white woman. Fifty-seven years later, the scars of a Nation continues to reveal the assumption of guilt-by race as evident in the 911 tapes released during the incident.

The Black Women's Agenda, Inc unites with other voices asking that you and your Department accelerate the investigation of the murder, but we also would like to understand why the state of Florida and the other legislators in Tallahassee did not become involve before the country insisted. We believe the "Stand Your Ground" law does not guarantee a right to confront and shoot someone and then claim self-defense. At the very least, the law should be examined and defined so that investigating law enforcement personnel are not allowed to assert his or her own interpretations.

Thank you, for having the U.S. Department of Justice involvement in this case.

Sincerely,

Gwen Catchings Hess

Gwainevere Catchings Hess
President, BWA

