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Chief of Police James E. Craig
Detroit Police Department
1301 Third Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226

Dear Chief Craig,

I am writing to you on behalf of Mr. Steve Neavling, a Detroit based journalist. In September, the police department removed Mr. Neavling from the media list and stopped sending him Amber Alerts, mug-shots, missing person reports and daily shooting reports that he had previously received and that other journalists continue to receive on a routine basis.

Detroit Police Public Information Officer, Sergeant Michael Woody sent Mr. Neavling an email stating "I have read enough of your blogs to know you will write whatever you want, regardless of what we or anybody else may have to say, which negates the ideology of balanced and fair reporting....Please do not bother responding to this email." Sergeant Woody's response is capricious, arbitrary and contrary to the law. United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, stated "Restraint of the press reflects society's lack of confidence in itself. It is a hallmark of an authoritarian regime." [New York Times v United States, 403 U.S. 713 (1971)].

Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 15.231 (1) (2) is clear on the issue:

'It is the public policy of this state that all persons, except those persons incarcerated in state or local correctional facilities, are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees, consistent with this act. The people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process.'

The Michigan Supreme Court has ruled that public bodies must provide access or release to information unless exempted by disclosure [Pennington v Washtenaw County Sheriff, 125 Mich. App (1983)]. Since the records requested by Mr. Neavling are not legally exempted from disclosure I am asking that Mr. Neavling's request be honored as well as his future requests that comport to MCL 15.231.

Sincerely,

Jamie Fields

Cc: Mayor Dave Bing
Kevyn Orr, Emergency Manager
Gary Brown, Chief Operating Officer
Edward V. Keelan, Corporation Counsel, City of Detroit Law Department
Kelly Minor, DPD Media Relations
Celia B. Washington, Detroit Board of Police Commissioners