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City Attorney filing a step in wrong direction Statement from Alderwoman Lewis on Sterling Brown case development

The more we learn about the Sterling Brown case the more concerning it becomes. Immediately following the incident, news of his tasing and arrest seemed—to many in the community—like an unreasonable action by police officers. This intuition proved to be correct when disturbing bodycam footage later revealed an excessive police response to a minor situation. Then, obviously racist posts on social media from one of the involved officers came to light. I was under the impression it could not get any worse but unfortunately it has. The City Attorney's official response to the Sterling Brown lawsuit claiming police officers were not wrong in their actions is, quite frankly, abhorrent.

It astounds me how anyone who saw the video can, in good conscience, come to the conclusion that escalation by police over a parking violation was —one, Mr. Brown's fault; two, justifiable by the officers; and three, within the scope of their authority.

We as public servants do not have the luxury of employing officers who have a heightened sense of authority or a “god” complex. We as a City must do better to bridge the gap between the community and MPD. That is a collective goal that can only be achieved by recognizing individuals who act improperly. In this instance it was the officers who were in the wrong.

Immediately after the Sterling Brown incident, my fellow Council members and I issued a joint statement calling for a paradigm shift in how police engage with the community. Rather than moving toward that, this latest development shifts blame and is a step backwards.

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