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ACLU of Utah Appeals County and City Decision to Withhold Abdi Mohamed Shooting Footage

SALT LAKE CITY, UT —The ACLU of Utah, with cooperating attorney David Reymann of Parr Brown Gee & Loveless, P.C., today filed an appeal with the Utah State Records Committee regarding the decision by Salt Lake County and Salt Lake City to withhold records related to the shooting of a young black man by Salt Lake City police officers, including footage from police officer body-worn cameras of the incident.

Abdi Mohamed, an 18-year-old community member who relocated to Utah from Somalia with his family, was shot multiple times by SLCPD officers on February 27, 2016, in the downtown Rio Grande neighborhood. He spent several weeks in a coma, and is currently confined to a wheelchair, due to the injuries he sustained during the shooting incident.

“Government accountability is not served by simply telling the public to trust that public officials have made good decisions,” the ACLU’s appeal states. “The public is entitled to see the facts for themselves and make their own independent judgments.”

The ACLU of Utah filed its original requests with the County and City under the state’s Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA) in May. The ACLU asserts that a state law enacted this year makes clear that footage from the officers’ body-worn cameras should be considered a public record under GRAMA and released to the community for review.

In response to the initial request, the County and City released some records about the incident, but excluded footage from police body-worn cameras, as well as some still photographs and surveillance camera footage.

The ACLU of Utah legal team appeared before the Salt Lake County GRAMA Appeals Board on October 18 to make a case for full disclosure of all requested information. When the Appeals Board announced its decision to uphold the County’s original decision to keep the excluded records secret, the ACLU of Utah pledged to appeal.

Attached is a copy of the appeal filed by the ACLU of Utah to the Utah State Records Committee.

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