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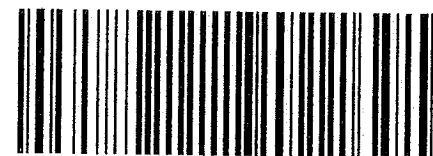
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BRENNAN
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FOR JUSTICE

at New York University School of Law

161 Avenue of the Americas
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New York, New York 10013

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**BRENNAN
CENTER
FOR JUSTICE**

February 17, 2015

Via Certified Mail and E-Mail

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Re: Maryland Public Information Act Request

To Whom It May Concern:

This is a request under the Maryland Public Information Act ("PIA"), GP § 4-101 *et seq.*, on behalf of the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law.

Background

The Brennan Center seeks records pertaining to "countering violent extremism" ("CVE") efforts in Montgomery County, MD. The Montgomery County Model reportedly seeks to "facilitat[e] effective community policing by fostering social cohesion amongst diverse county residents and creating bottom-up strategies to promote public safety and reduce violence."¹ The MCM has been described as a model for the nation² as CVE pilot programs are debuted in 3 cities nationwide.³

The Montgomery County Model ("MCM") has been described as a "public-private partnership" between the Montgomery County Executive's Office of Community Partnerships ("OCP"), the Montgomery County Police Department ("MCPD"), and the World Organization for Resource

¹ DEP'T OF JUSTICE, FY 2016 PERFORMANCE BUDGET: OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES 27 (2015), *available at* http://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/jmd/pages/attachments/2015/02/02/29_community_oriented_policing_services_cops.pdf.

² *See, e.g.* John Cohen, Acting Under Secretary of Homeland Sec. for Intelligence and Analysis, Dep't of Homeland Sec., Policy Forum at The Washington Institute: Revisiting U.S. CVE Efforts One Year After the Boston Bombing (Mar. 28, 2014), *available at* <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/revisiting-u.s.-cve-efforts-one-year-after-the-boston-bombing>.

³ Press Release, Dep't of Justice, Attorney General Holder Announced Pilot Program to Counter Violent Extremists, Sept. 15, 2014, *available at* <http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/attorney-general-holder-announces-pilot-program-counter-violent-extremists>.

Development and Education.⁴ Many of the OCP's CVE activities are reportedly carried out through the Faith Community Working Group, which comprises three sub-committees: the *Intervention and Prevention of Violence subcommittee*, which seeks to develop awareness "about the precursors to violent extremism and homegrown radicalization," the *Solidarity Programing Committee*, which seeks to "foster inter-ethnic and interreligious social harmony," and the *Clergy Response Team*, which seeks to "equip faith-based organizations with training, resources and a common platform to respond to hate crimes and other incidents of violence."⁵

Records requested

Specifically, the Brennan Center requests the following records:

1. Legal memoranda, procedures, policies, directives, practices, guidance or guidelines pertaining to the OCP's acquisition, collection, use, retention and dissemination of information concerning members of the public in the course of assessments, investigations, programs, events and other activities conducted pursuant to the MCM;
2. Records concerning the training of Montgomery County Police Department ("MCPD") personnel and other County personnel regarding Islam, Muslim culture, and/or Muslim, Arab, South Asian, or Middle Eastern communities, including but not limited to any training materials, outlines, instructions or other documents used by or provided to MCPD and other County personnel participating in any programs, events and activities conducted pursuant to the MCM, and any records showing the names and titles of participants and trainers, dates, hours, and locations of trainings, and any evaluations or related material;
3. Records created by the Intervention and Prevention of Violence subcommittee of the Faith Community Working Group that identify, describe, list or discuss "ideological and non-ideological precursors that cause violence" referred to in the article entitled "FCWG: A Model for Integrating the Faith Community in Violence Prevention,"⁶
4. Records created by the Intervention and Prevention of Violence subcommittee that describe or discuss the "intervention model" referred to in the article entitled "FCWG: A Model for Integrating the Faith Community in Violence Prevention;"⁷ and

⁴ FY 2016 PERFORMANCE BUDGET, *supra* note 1, at 27.

⁵ *FCWG: A Model for Integrating the Faith Community in Violence Prevention*, WORLD ORG. FOR RES. DEV. AND EDUC., <http://www.worde.org/events/fcwg-a-model-for-integrating-the-faith-community-in-violence-prevention/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2015).

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

5. Records created by the OCP (including but not limited to those created by Faith Community Working Group) since Feb 1, 2013 describing, listing or discussing the goals, aims, targets and/or objectives of the Montgomery County Model, including any correspondence, electronic or written.

Fees

The Brennan Center requests a waiver of all fees for the search for, preparation of, and reproduction of records responsive to this request pursuant to GP § 4-206(e)(1). The Brennan Center is a non-profit, non-partisan public policy and law institute at the New York University School of Law that conducts research and disseminates to the public information about issues affecting justice and democracy.⁸ In this case, the records requested concern details of new programs and initiatives that the OCP has implemented in conjunction with other county offices, private actors and federal agencies as part of an effort to counter violent extremism.⁹ Such programs have been the subject of national importance and debate,¹⁰ especially in the wake of reports concerning the “homegrown” threat posed by groups like the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Members of the public, especially those living in Montgomery, have a significant and urgent interest in knowing how Montgomery County’s Model for countering violent extremism is affecting their communities and their lives. Accordingly, a waiver of all fees arising from this request “would be in the public interest.” GP § 4-206(e)(2).

Response Requested in 30 days

Please notify us of your determination of our request and release all responsive records as soon as possible, and no later than 30 days from the receipt of this request. GP § 4-203(b). Please provide us a copy of responsive records in a searchable and analyzable electronic format where possible. GP § 4-205(c)(1). If any part of this request is denied, please immediately notify us of the denial, and provide a written statement of the reasons and legal authority for the denial no later than 10 working days from the receipt of this request. GP § 4-203(b) – (c). If you choose to

⁸ The Brennan Center for Justice is a nonpartisan law and policy institute that seeks to improve our systems of democracy and justice. Please visit our website for more information. *Our Mission*, BRENNAN CTR. FOR JUSTICE, <https://www.brennancenter.org/about> (last visited Feb. 13, 2015).

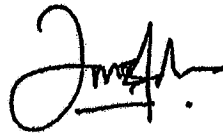
⁹ *The Montgomery County Model*, WORLD ORG. FOR RES. DEV. AND EDUC., <http://www.worde.org/programs/the-montgomery-county-model/> (last visited Feb. 13, 2015).

¹⁰ See, e.g. MICHAEL PRICE, BRENNAN CTR. FOR JUSTICE, COMMUNITY OUTREACH OR INTELLIGENCE GATHERING? (2015), available at <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/community-outreach-or-intelligence-gathering>; Murtaza Hussain, Cora Currier & Jana Winter, *Is Your Child a Terrorist? U.S. Government Questionnaire Rates Families at Risk for Extremism*, INTERCEPT (Feb. 9, 2015), <https://firstlook.org/theintercept/2015/02/09/government-develops-questionnaire-see-might-become-terrorist/>; Naureen Shah, *Terrorist or ... Teenager*, SLATE (Nov. 12, 2014), http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2014/11/justice_department_s_countering_violent_extremism_program_ripe_for_abuse.html; *Is This a New War on Terror?*, POLITICO (Sept. 16, 2014), http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2014/09/is-this-a-new-war-on-terror-111022_Page2.html.

deny inspection of any portion of the responsive records, please provide the reasons and legal authority for such denial, and portions of the records that are available for inspection.

Should you have any questions concerning this request, please contact Amos Toh by telephone at (646) 292-8380 or via e-mail at amos.toh@nyu.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amos Toh', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Amos Toh
Counsel/Katz Fellow, Liberty & National Security Program
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