Black Youth Project 100; New Orleans Workers’ Center for Racial Justice; American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana; Louisiana Chapter of the National Lawyers’ Guild,

Plaintiffs,

-vs-

City of Baton Rouge; Baton Rouge Police Department; Carl Dabadie, Jr., in his official capacity as Chief of the Baton Rouge Police Department; Louisiana State Police; Louisiana Department of Public Safety; Col. Michael Edmonson, in his official capacity as Superintendent of the Louisiana State Police; East Baton Rouge Sheriff’s Department; Sid J. Gautreaux III, in his official capacity as Sheriff of the East Baton Rouge Sheriff’s Department; Jeff Landry, in his official capacity as Attorney General of the State of Louisiana; Kip Holden in his official capacity as the Mayor-President of East Baton Rouge Parish; Hillar C. Moore, III, in his official capacity as District Attorney for East Baton Rouge Parish; Department of Public Safety (Louisiana State Police)

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF ALISSA LUIS

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I hereby declare as follows:

1. My name is Alissa Luis. My date of birth is 07/22/1984.


3. I was stationed at the northeastern corner of East Blvd. and Government St. When I arrived at the scene I saw Sheriff’s officers in full riot gear, including shields and night sticks. They had automatic weapons and were wearing armor. I saw them put on gas mask bags. I saw at least two rifles with non-lethal weapons and two crowd-control sirens. Many officers were wearing riot gear and had their names taped over, so I could not identify who they were. Officers from the Baton Rouge Police Department, East
Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's Office and the Louisiana State Police were present at the scene.

4. I also saw two armored vehicles with law enforcement posted out of the turret with automatic weapons. One was from the East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Office and one was from the Baton Rouge Police Department.

5. I observed the protesters acting in a peaceful and non-violent manner. I did not witness provocation of any law enforcement office by any of the protesters.

6. I was standing on the sidewalk on the northeast corner of Government Street and East Blvd., and I was not obstructing traffic. Protesters were standing on the west side of East Blvd. south of Government St. Some protesters were standing on the median between the north and southbound lanes on East Blvd. When I arrived at my post, protesters were standing on the sidewalk and in the street. I observed the protesters clear the street and move to either side of East Blvd. once asked by law enforcement.

7. I observed protesters acting in a peaceful and nonviolent manner, though many expressed anger, frustration and agitation toward the police verbally and through hand gestures. I observed the protesters remain peaceful and confident while standing and chanting on the side of East Blvd. The mood of the crowd and law enforcement changed noticeably when East Baton Rouge Parish Sheriff's officers marched westward on Government toward the protesters.

8. The East Baton Rouge Sheriff's Officers were dressed in riot gear consisting of shields, helmets with visors, batons, armor and automatic weapons. Once these officers were in view of the protesters, I observed many protesters becoming fearful and attempting to disperse. I heard many screams and chaotic noises from the general direction of the protesters that sounded fearful. From my vantage point, it was clear that the protesters were acting in a peaceful manner until armored law enforcement officers began to approach.

9. I witnessed these events while standing on the sidewalk. Officers located on my side of Government St. asked onlookers to remain on the sidewalk and I complied.

10. I heard law enforcement officers tell bystanders that they would be arrested if they stepped into the road near where I was standing.

11. From my post, I observed protesters standing on the porch of the private residence located on the southwest corner of East Blvd. and France St. I was too far away to hear the owner of this property give permission for the protesters to be there, but I believe this
to be the case. However, I have video of the homeowner stating that she gave protestors permission to occupy her property. This video was collected after the protest had dispersed from East Blvd.

12. During the protest, law enforcement (I am unclear as to which agency) asked protestors to clear the roadway on East Blvd. I observed protestors move to the side of the road once this request was made. Protestors did not appear to be obstructing the roadway on East Blvd., though no cars were able to pass as law enforcement vehicles were parked in the intersection on East Blvd. and Government St.

13. I heard law enforcement officers tell protestors over a public address system that they would be arrested if they did not disperse from the area on East Blvd.

14. I saw law enforcement officers advance on the protestors from east, south and north sides on East Blvd. I heard from bystanders in the crowd near me that protestors were being arrested as they dispersed westbound on France St. I believe that many protestors did not disperse for fear that they would be arrested as they left the area westbound on France St. Protestors were unable to disperse to the north, east or south on East Blvd. due to advancing law enforcement lines.

15. I saw Sheriff’s officers in riot gear advance at the choke point on East Blvd. and France St. They entered private property uninvited without a search warrant. I have video of the homeowner stating that she did not invite them in and that they did not have a warrant.

16. I heard law enforcement state “This is no longer a lawful assembly” over a public address system. I am unclear as to which law enforcement agency made this announcement.

17. I witnessed the arrests of many protestors. Too many, in fact, to have counted. I witnessed protestors being arrested in the yard of the private residence on the southwest corner of East Blvd. and France St., on the sidewalk on the west side of East St., and being dragged from the private property into the street. During these arrests, protestors were not blocking the roadway.

18. I also observed a group of 12 arrestees being held on the south side of Government St. between East St. and I-10. In this group, one of the arrestees was bleeding profusely from the left side of his head. I was able to discern the bleeding this from my post on the corner of Government St. and East Blvd. approximately 100 feet away. He was treated by a medic briefly, who appeared to clean his wound. I observed the protester talking to officers multiple times after the medic treated him, and I observed him turn his head toward the officers. It appeared as if he was continuing to show the officers the wound on his head.
19. I observed multiple officers tackle, hit and hold down one protester who ran from the crowd across East Blvd. I observed several officers tackle and hold down two protesters on the corner of Government St. and Maximillian St., approximately five officers per person. I observed hordes of officers tackle, grab, pull and throw down several protesters on East Blvd. I witnessed several officers sitting and kneeling on protesters backs, necks and heads during the arrests on East Blvd. after these protesters were seen to be complying with their arrests. I witnessed many with hands held in the air being thrown to the ground. I believe the actions of the majority of law enforcement officers during the arrests of July 10th were excessively forceful, intimidating, and escalating in nature.

20. I saw at least four law enforcement officers carrying automatic weapons. I am unfamiliar with what type of weapon they were carrying, though they were similar to the type used by the military.

21. Based on my first hand observations, I believe that law enforcement attempted to stop and disperse a peaceful protest through intimidation and direct use of force on non-violent individuals. I believe that the use of militarized weapons, displays of power (such as beating shields with batons), distributing gas masks to officers, and cornering protesters were methods by which law enforcement attempted to scare protesters and persuade them to leave an otherwise peaceful demonstration.

22. I became fearful of the police as they began marching in formation toward the protesters on East Blvd., though I did not leave my post. I did not participate in the protest per my duties as a legal observer, though I was afraid that I too may become a victim of police violence if I performed my duties from a post closer to where the arrests were occurring. I was too fearful to perform my duties at a location closer to where the arrests took place, as it appeared that arrests were occurring indiscriminately and without cause.

23. I had planned to protest in upcoming marches, though will likely not do so in the future. I have been dissuaded by the reports of arrested protesters whose statements I collected upon their release from East Baton Rouge Parish Prison as part of my duties as a legal observer.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 12th day of July 2016.

Alissa Luis