



CITY OF LONDON

MAYOR TRACIE HANDLEY

501 SOUTH MAIN STREET
LONDON, KENTUCKY
606.864.4169

September 8, 2025

Colonel Phillip "PJ" Burnett, Jr. Commissioner
Kentucky State Police
919 Versailles Road
Frankfort, KY 40601

RE: URGENT REQUEST FOR STATUS UPDATE - DOUGLAS HARLESS INVESTIGATION

Dear Commissioner Burnett:

As Mayor of the City of London, I am writing to respectfully request an update regarding the Kentucky State Police investigation into the officer-involved shooting death of Douglas Marshall Harless on December 23, 2024. It has been over eight months since this tragic incident occurred, and there have been no updates. The lack of any kind of update continues to foster unrest within the community.

DISRUPTION TO OUR COMMUNITY

The shooting death of Mr. Harless has created profound and lasting damage to the fabric of our community. Certain citizens of Laurel County live in fear and mistrust of law enforcement—emotions that grow stronger with each passing day that the questions from the shooting go unanswered.

The community has organized vigils, protests, and memorial services while waiting for basic answers about what happened that night. Local businesses report customers expressing concerns about visiting our area. Families have reported being afraid to call police when they need help, creating a dangerous erosion of the community-police relationship that took decades to build.

The lack of any sort of update has fostered rumors, speculation, and conspiracy theories that poison our civic discourse. Social media platforms are filled with conflicting accounts and anger directed not just at law enforcement, but at local government officials who are not able to provide answers. This investigation's length and lack of updates is tearing apart the social trust that holds our community together.

The Harless family itself has suffered. Mr. Harless's daughter, Nicki Lawson, and his surviving family members have been denied basic information about the circumstances surrounding their loved one's death. This family has been forced to bury their patriarch without understanding why he died.

Every day this investigation remains shrouded in secrecy inflicts additional trauma on a family already devastated by loss.

SPECIFIC REQUESTS

I respectfully request the following information as soon as possible:

1. **Investigation Timeline:** A specific, realistic completion date for this investigation
2. **Preliminary Findings:** Any conclusions that can be shared without compromising ongoing work
3. **Document Release:** Is it possible to release the search warrant and other non-sensitive documents?

CONCLUSION

Douglas Harless was a 63-year-old maintenance worker, father, and grandfather who was killed in his own home. Our community needs answers.

I respectfully request a prompt response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tracie A Handley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tracie" and last name "Handley" clearly legible.

Tracie A Handley
Mayor, City of London, Kentucky

cc: Governor Andy Beshear

Attorney General Russell Coleman

Laurel County Judge-Executive David Westerfield

London City Council - via email