



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Law
Office of Special Prosecutions
CRIMINAL DIVISION

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October 10, 2025

Chief Derek Bos
Juneau Police Department
6255 Alaway Avenue
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Use of Force Review—AST Case No. AK25076473

Chief Bos:

This letter summarizes the Office of Special Prosecutions' ("OSP") review of the incident involving Juneau Police Department ("JPD") Officer Brandon LeBlanc's use of force against Chris Williams, Jr. on July 30, 2025, in Juneau. This analysis is based on my review of the investigative reports related to this incident, audio and video recordings of the incident, subsequent interviews, videos, photographs, and other evidence submitted to date.¹ The purpose of the evaluation in this matter is to determine whether Officer LeBlanc should face criminal charges for his use of force during this incident.² In other words, the question is whether Officer LeBlanc's actions exceeded the use of force he was afforded under AS 11.81.330 and/or AS 11.81.370, and rose to conduct that constituted an assault against Mr. Williams, Jr.

After applying the governing law to the facts and circumstances surrounding this incident, OSP will not file criminal charges against Officer LeBlanc. For the reasons explained below, I have concluded that the State could likely not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Officer LeBlanc's use of force was not justified under the law, and the State will therefore not pursue charges against Officer LeBlanc.

¹ This review is based on the information provided up to the date this letter was written. Additional information not previously provided to OSP for review could change the analysis in this matter.

² The purpose of OSP's review is solely to determine whether criminal charges against Officer LeBlanc are warranted given his use of force. OSP does not review these cases for policy violations or to determine whether an officer's conduct is appropriate under any applicable use-of-force policies. OSP also expresses no opinion as to the general appropriateness of any JPD policies, including use-of-force policies.

Summary of Pertinent Facts³

On July 30, 2025, two JPD officers were dispatched to multiple calls reporting an escalating but non-physical disturbance between a female, identified as the aggressor, and a male. JPD Officer Allen arrived on scene first and contacted the reported aggressor, a woman identified as M.D.⁴, and the reported victim, a male identified as I.B. Chris Williams, Jr., M.D.'s fiancée, was present when Ofc. Allen arrived, but it was determined he was not present during the reported incident between M.D. and I.B.

Ofc. Allen interviewed M.D., I.B., and Mr. Williams about the incident. When Officer LeBlanc arrived at the scene, Officer Allen told M.D. she was under arrest and began to handcuff M.D.

As Officers Allen and LeBlanc were arresting M.D., Mr. Williams was standing nearby M.D. and the two officers. I.B. was within ear and eyesight but was approximately 15-20 feet away from the others. After handcuffing M.D., the officers brought her to the patrol car. On the recordings from the officers' body-worn cameras ("BWC"), I.B. can be seen taking photographs or videos and he can be heard yelling towards M.D. and Mr. Williams.⁵ As captured by video and in photographs, Mr. Williams moved towards I.B. and stood with his hands balled up by his sides in an aggressive stance facing I.B.; he then said, "Fuck you," to I.B.

Officer LeBlanc, who was near Officer Allen's car with M.D. and Officer Allen, is seen monitoring the situation between Mr. Williams and I.B. and told Mr. Williams he needs to "Keep going," or "Go," on two occasions. M.D. then yelled at Mr. Williams to "Take care of him," referring to I.B. In response, Mr. Williams is seen leaning towards I.B. and talking to him. Ofc. Allen pointed down the sidewalk, away from I.B., and told Mr. Williams to move away from I.B. When Mr. Williams ignored Officer Allen's directions and continued

³ This factual summary is based upon the investigative materials provided to OSP in the above-referenced case, including written reports, video and audios from the incident, and audio and video recorded interviews after the incident. The summary included in this letter discuss those facts that are necessary to inform you of the nature and extent of my review, but it does not represent the entirety of the investigation or the materials I reviewed. This summary is largely based on the video captured by the body-worn cameras ("BWC") of Officers Allen and LeBlanc, the two patrol in-car videos ("ICV"), and the video and photographs taken by civilian I.B. Officer Allen's BWC shows his initial interactions upon arrival at scene and his investigation into the disturbance call; it does not show the incident between Officer LeBlanc and Mr. Williams. Officer LeBlanc's BWC captures the verbal exchange between him and Mr. Williams but does not clearly show the use of force. The two ICVs (particularly Officer LeBlanc's) capture the body positioning of Officer LeBlanc and Mr. Williams at the hood of the car. I.B.'s cell phone video captures the overall view, including the takedown, but does not capture the earlier interactions, or all of the audio related to the incident.

⁴ Initials are used for civilian witnesses throughout this letter, as identifying their full names in this publicly available document is unnecessary. Mr. Williams was previously identified publicly, so his name is used. See generally Alaska Constitution, Article I, sec. 22.

⁵ I.B. appeared angry about what had occurred earlier and was making comments to M.D. about how racism would not be tolerated.

to engage with I.B., including pointing and moving towards I.B., Officer Allen grabbed Mr. Williams' jacket to pull him away from I.B. and redirected him to move further away from I.B. Officer LeBlanc then did the same, positioning his hand on Mr. Williams' left shoulder; Officer LeBlanc released Mr. Williams with a slight shove to Mr. Williams' back as Mr. Williams began to walk away from the officers. Officer LeBlanc told Mr. Williams, "Go, before you go to jail too."

In response, Mr. Williams turned towards LeBlanc and emphatically said, "Fucker!"; Mr. Williams' hands are momentarily balled up by his legs. Mr. Williams then raised his arms up in a "hands up" motion and told LeBlanc twice, "Don't do that." Officer LeBlanc responded "What... what?" in a confrontational tone. He then directed Mr. Williams to put his hands behind his back and told him, "Turn around, you're going to jail too."

Officer LeBlanc moved Mr. Williams to the front of his patrol car and positioned him so Mr. Williams was bent over the hood of the vehicle, with Officer LeBlanc behind him. Officer LeBlanc ordered Mr. Williams to put his hands behind his back and/or to do it "right now" five times. At one point Officer LeBlanc told Mr. Williams, "You [sic] 'bout to get slammed." Officer LeBlanc was able to get partial control over Mr. Williams' left hand, but the in-car video (ICV) camera footage shows that Mr. Williams appeared to be putting his left hand on the push bar of the vehicle for leverage to push against Officer LeBlanc. Mr. Williams' right hand can be seen on the ICV positioned under Mr. Williams' body at chest level; it is possible that Mr. Williams' hand is pinned underneath him due to the weight of the two men, but at times it appears that Mr. Williams is pushing his right hand on the hood of the vehicle as additional leverage to push against Officer LeBlanc. The view from Officer LeBlanc's BWC is blocked by Mr. Williams' back and does not capture the positioning of Mr. Williams' hands. It is also likely that from the officer's vantage point behind Mr. Williams, that Officer LeBlanc could not have seen where Mr. Williams' right hand was, or what, if anything, he was doing with it.

As seen on the cell phone footage taken by I.B., Officer LeBlanc conducted a takedown by wrapping Mr. Williams' torso with his arms and then pulling Mr. Williams backwards, using Officer LeBlanc's weight to pull Mr. Williams with him to the ground. Officer LeBlanc fell backwards first, landing mostly on the left side of his body while still holding Mr. Williams. Officer LeBlanc then quickly rolled to the left side of his body. Mr. Williams landed on the ground to the left of the officer's body; as he fell, Mr. Williams' head audibly and visibly hit the pavement and he was immediately rendered unconscious. Officer LeBlanc stood up; while standing over Mr. Williams he said, "Walking now, huh...? What I told you?" Ofc. Allen called for medics, who responded and treated Mr. Williams. Mr. Williams was eventually medivaced to Anchorage for treatment. The length of time between when Officer LeBlanc told Mr. Williams he was going to jail until the takedown was approximately 19 seconds.

I.B.'s video of the incident was posted to social media, where it received significant publicity and public outcry. JPD asked the Alaska State Troopers ("AST") to conduct a review of the incident to determine whether criminal charges were warranted. Investigators from AST's Alaska Bureau of Investigation ("ABI") were assigned to the case and interviewed Mr. Williams, Officer Allen, I.B., Officer LeBlanc, and others.

Officer Allen described his initial response consistently with what was depicted in his BWC. He reported that he did not see most of Officer LeBlanc's interaction with Mr. Williams, to include Officer LeBlanc's takedown of Mr. Williams, as he was loading M.D. into his patrol vehicle at the time.

Officer LeBlanc was interviewed as well. He explained he had been with JPD for about one year and had been a law enforcement officer for approximately 18 years previously in various police departments in Louisiana. Officer LeBlanc said he was dispatched to the call as support for Officer Allen, but he was coming from farther away and it took him longer to get there. He said Officer Allen had made the decision to arrest M.D. and was trying to handcuff her when he arrived. Officer LeBlanc said he did not know anything about the situation upon arriving, except that it was a disturbance call. He said he did not have prior experience with, or knowledge of, Mr. Williams.

Officer LeBlanc reported that as the officers were escorting M.D. into Officer Allen's car, I.B. was yelling towards M.D. and M.D. turned to Mr. Williams and told Mr. Williams to "finish him off," referring to I.B. Officer LeBlanc said Mr. Williams then began to verbally engage with I.B. The officers told Mr. Williams multiple times to leave the scene. Officer LeBlanc said Officer Allen "nudged" Mr. Williams towards Officer LeBlanc, who also "nudged" Mr. Williams, and told Mr. Williams, "Sir, move, or you're going to jail." Officer LeBlanc said Mr. Williams turned around and got into what Officer LeBlanc considered to be a "fighting stance," with both of his fists balled up at his side. Officer LeBlanc said Mr. Williams "charge[d]" towards him and said "Fuck!"

Officer LeBlanc described thinking Mr. Williams was going to fight him "or cause me great bodily harm," or try and engage with I.B., since M.D. had just told Mr. Williams to "finish" I.B. off. Officer LeBlanc described both Mr. Williams and M.D. as being highly intoxicated; he said he observed slurred speech, that Mr. Williams was unstable on his feet and smelled of alcohol. Officer LeBlanc said there was no indication Mr. Williams was under the influence of drugs, nor did he observe any indication he was suffering from any mental health issues.

Officer LeBlanc said he approached Mr. Williams and told him he was going to jail and was under arrest. Officer LeBlanc brought Mr. Williams to the front of his vehicle to place him into handcuffs; he said Mr. Williams was "actively resisting, pulling, pulling and pulling, and pushing and prodding" the whole time. Officer LeBlanc explained Mr. Williams

was not passively resisting or just lying there while leaving his arms underneath him, but rather was actively struggling against Officer LeBlanc. He said he had control “somewhat” over Mr. Williams’ left arm, but Mr. Williams was pulling and would not fully give Officer LeBlanc control over his hands. Officer LeBlanc said Mr. Williams was struggling even after he asked him several times to give him his hands while Officer LeBlanc was “lawfully trying to make an arrest.” Officer LeBlanc told investigators that there were several things Mr. Williams could have been arrested for, to include disorderly conduct⁶ for challenging Officer LeBlanc to fight when he turned towards the officer with his fists balled and said “Fucker!”, interfering,⁷ and assault.

Officer LeBlanc described Mr. Williams as being surprisingly strong, and said he believed Mr. Williams was about his same height and age, although he acknowledged he did not get a good look at Mr. Williams before the incident occurred. Officer LeBlanc described giving Mr. Williams “several warnings” when he got him to the hood of the car, including saying “sir, sir, I am going to slam you.” Officer LeBlanc indicated that by saying that, he meant that he was going to take Mr. Williams to the ground to put him in cuffs.

Officer LeBlanc told investigators that because they initially encouraged Mr. Williams to leave, they had not patted him down to search for weapons earlier, and he therefore did not know whether Mr. Williams had any weapons on him. Officer LeBlanc said there was “always a concern when you’re an officer on the street” that someone was armed, especially in Alaska. He noted that “Everybody’s known to carry knives. Everybody.” Officer LeBlanc said he was worried Mr. Williams could be reaching to get a knife to stab him, but clarified it was a general concern and he could not see anything specific that Mr. Williams might have been reaching for.

Officer LeBlanc said he thought he needed to get control over Mr. Williams. Due to the struggle and the strength Mr. Williams was exhibiting, Officer LeBlanc said he believed he needed to “take him down” in order to get control over both hands and put him in handcuffs. Officer LeBlanc described the takedown technique he used as one that has been taught to him several times over the course of his law enforcement career. He described the execution of the takedown in this incident as “technically sound,” in that Officer LeBlanc’s hip and shoulder hit the ground first. Officer LeBlanc explained that the maneuver is designed for him to land first, with the suspect landing on top of him. Officer LeBlanc said he did not intend for what happened to Mr. Williams to occur, and that while he has performed the technique “more times than I can count,” he had never previously had a result occur like what happened to Mr. Williams.

⁶ Officer LeBlanc referred to the crime as “disorderly” but appears to have been referring to disorderly conduct, AS 11.61.110, which includes a section that encompasses challenging another to fight.

⁷ Officer LeBlanc appears to reference Resisting or Interfering with Arrest, AS 11.56.700.

Officer LeBlanc thought he had been taught a variation of the takedown he used on Mr. Williams at the Department of Public Safety (“DPS”) recertification academy he attended in December of 2024 and told investigators he had been taught the move as a defensive tactic at his prior agencies. Officer LeBlanc told investigators that taking someone to the ground was one of the lowest levels of force available. He stated that he used force to bring Mr. Williams to the ground, where Officer LeBlanc would have greater leverage than when Mr. Williams was positioned against the vehicle, allowing for better control of both of Mr. Williams’ arms.

Mr. Williams was interviewed by ABI investigators. Mr. Williams remembered limited portions of the day leading up to the incident. He confirmed M.D. was his fiancé, and that he had been drinking earlier in the day. He said he was not present for the initial incident between M.D. and I.B. He did not remember details about the interaction with the officers, *other than what he saw later from the video footage that had been publicly available*. Mr. Williams told investigators his right thumb was fractured or sprained, his collarbone was bruised, and there had been bleeding in his brain but that it was improving. Mr. Williams said his pain was intense. Investigators noted and photographed that Mr. Williams had bruising and scabbing to the left side of his head, on and above the left part of his forehead and on his left cheek, that his left arm was in a sling and the collarbone area was deeply bruised, and that his right hand was wrapped in a bandage. Mr. Williams declined to sign a form authorizing the investigators to access his medical files. Thus, aside from officers’ observations and Mr. Williams’ statements, there is no evidence available to assess his injuries at this time.

Officer LeBlanc’s personnel records were obtained by search warrant. A review of these records, both from Louisiana and Alaska, does not show prior complaints about incidents of similar conduct or unlawful use of force incidents. Based on a review of DPS academy records and conversations with trainers at the academy, the type of takedown utilized by Officer LeBlanc was *not* taught at the DPS academy Officer LeBlanc attended. The maneuver had *previously* been taught at the academy, but had not been taught there for several years. OSP has not requested, received, nor reviewed any records from JPD to determine whether Officer LeBlanc attended any other trainings on use of force since arriving in Alaska.

Legal Analysis

Under Alaska law, any person—whether a law enforcement officer or not—is justified in using nondeadly force against another person when and to the extent the person reasonably believes the use of nondeadly force is necessary to defend oneself or others against an unlawful threat of force, with some listed exceptions.⁸ Alaska law also authorizes

⁸ AS 11.81.330; AS 11.81.340.

a police officer to use nondeadly force and to threaten to use deadly force against another person when and to the extent the officer reasonably believes it necessary to make an arrest... or to make a lawful stop.⁹ Alaska statutes define nondeadly force as “force other than deadly force”; deadly force is defined as “force that the person uses with the intent of causing, or uses under circumstances that the person knows create a substantial risk of causing, death or serious physical injury.”¹⁰

Level of force used

The first step in the analysis is to determine the level of force used by Officer LeBlanc: nondeadly or deadly. The circumstances relevant to this determination include Officer LeBlanc’s prior training on the takedown maneuver; that the DPS academy had also taught the maneuver until relatively recently; the method in which Officer LeBlanc attempted to utilize the takedown (by attempting for his own body to hit the ground first, with Mr. Williams’ body to fall on top of his); Officer LeBlanc’s prior success at using the takedown without causing harm others; and his stated intent that he was not trying to harm Mr. Williams by his use of the takedown, but rather was using it to get Mr. Williams on the ground so he had leverage and could handcuff Mr. Williams. While the maneuver used by Officer LeBlanc did seem to cause significant injury, this result appears to be an aberration, not an expected or known result. Given these circumstances, particularly that the takedown maneuver was not known to create a substantial risk of causing death or serious physical injury and the officer’s belief this tactic could be used without causing serious physical injury – the State would not be able to prove his actions amounted to deadly force. Thus, based on the circumstances in this case, Officer LeBlanc’s use of force against Mr. Williams is considered nondeadly force.

Self-defense

The next step in the analysis applies the facts to the legal standard for using nondeadly force in defense of self or others. Under Alaska law, for the use of nondeadly force to be appropriate, it must be reasonable, based both on a subjective and objective standard. A subjective standard is what the specific individual using the force actually believed was reasonably necessary. An objective standard is what the average, reasonable person, would have believed in the same circumstances.¹¹ A person’s right to use force in self-defense does not hinge on whether the person actually faced an imminent attack; it is sufficient that, given the circumstances, the person reasonably believed that they were about to be assaulted, even though this belief ultimately turned out to be mistaken.¹²

⁹ AS 11.81.370. The statute states that the use of force in making an arrest or stop is not justified under this section unless the peace officer reasonably believed the arrest or stop is lawful.

¹⁰ AS 11.81.900(b)(40), (16). “Force” is further defined (AS 11.81.900(b)(28)) as is “serious physical injury” (AS 11.81.900(b)(59)).

¹¹ *Weston v. State*, 682 P.2d 119, 1121 (Alaska 1984).

¹² *McCracken v. State*, 914 P.2d 893, 898 (Alaska App. 1996).

Subjective belief

During his interview, Officer LeBlanc provided three reasons he feared for his own or another's safety during the encounter with Mr. Williams. First, that Mr. Williams moved towards and yelled at I.B. after M.D. told Mr. Williams to "finish him off." The officer clearly articulated a subjective belief that at that time, a third party was at risk of assault. Second, Officer LeBlanc described Mr. Williams turning towards him (LeBlanc) with his (Williams') fists balled at his sides as he shouted "Fuck!" at Officer LeBlanc. This description also provides a subjective belief that Mr. Williams might assault the officer. Third, Officer LeBlanc expressed concern that during the struggle on the hood of the patrol vehicle, Mr. Williams might be armed with a knife and might have been trying to pull that knife out. The officer's statements establish his subjective beliefs about all three perceived threats of imminent harm.

Objective belief

Those three subjective beliefs must also be evaluated through a reasonable person's lens, in order to determine whether they are objectively reasonable. The State is required to prove that an objective person would *not* have reasonably believed the same, if facing the same circumstances. In evaluating the reasonableness of an officer's use of force, the analysis of the facts must be viewed in light of the totality of circumstances, as seen from the perspective of a reasonable officer with the same knowledge known to the officer at the time the force was used—including any prior information the officer knew at that time—and *without* 20/20 hindsight.¹³

In this case, Officer LeBlanc arrived on the scene without much information. Officer LeBlanc did not know anything about Mr. Williams, including whether he had any prior contacts with police, whether he had any prior violent history, or any other relevant history. Officer LeBlanc noted that Mr. Williams appeared to be highly intoxicated, but not under the influence of drugs or experiencing a mental health crisis. He observed Officer Allen was placing M.D. under arrest, and the two officers worked together to get her into handcuffs.

As M.D. was being handcuffed, I.B. and Mr. Williams began to engage verbally back and forth, and M.D. instructed Mr. Williams, to "finish off" I.B. Despite being told repeatedly by both officers, Mr. Williams did not leave the area and instead continued to engage with I.B. in a confrontational manner; Mr. Williams can be seen during this time getting animated while talking to I.B. and facing off with him with his hands balled into fists at his side for a portion of the exchange. Aside from Mr. Williams' fists being balled up for a short period time, that he was intoxicated, and was exchanging heated words with I.B.—there are no objective facts to support the belief Mr. Williams was about to assault I.B. Thus, it is likely, but not guaranteed, that the State would be able to disprove a defense of others claim.

¹³ *Jones-Nelson v. State*, 512 P.3d 665, 672-673 (Alaska 2022).

Officer LeBlanc also claimed he feared harm to himself when Mr. Williams responded to being nudged to keep walking down the sidewalk by turning and facing Officer LeBlanc and saying, “Fucker.” Mr. Williams hands were momentarily balled into fists during this exchange, but he then stopped moving and raised his open hands in the air saying, “Don’t do that.” Although Officer LeBlanc described Mr. Williams as “charging” towards him, the video does not show that type of movement. Moreover, as seen on camera, Officer LeBlanc is considerably bigger than Mr. Williams, although Officer LeBlanc estimated they were about the same size. In the totality, this conduct would not likely qualify as a threat of harm from which Officer LeBlanc needed to protect himself with force. Again, the evidence supports the notion the State would likely prevail in defeating a self-defense claim based on the alleged threat to Officer LeBlanc during this portion of the interaction.

Finally, in discussing his interaction with Mr. Williams at the hood of his patrol vehicle, Officer LeBlanc expressed a general concern for his safety because Mr. Williams might be armed, because “everybody” is armed with a knife in Alaska. Officer LeBlanc further stated he has only met “maybe one or two people” who have not had a knife on them in Alaska. However, the officer also described this concern as “general,” and noted he had not observed any specific indications that Mr. Williams was reaching for something, or that he had a weapon. In this case, Officer LeBlanc could not articulate any objectively reasonable, specific basis for the fear that Mr. Williams was either armed with a weapon or imminently about to use a weapon against Officer LeBlanc. Although Alaska law does not require a person to actually face an imminent attack, as long as the person reasonably believed they were about to be assaulted, a self-defense justification still requires more than a generalized fear. It is therefore likely that the State could disprove a claim of self-defense at trial, as Mr. Williams’ conduct did not rise to the level of an articulable threat of an imminent use of force, such that Officer LeBlanc was authorized to use force in self-defense.

Justification for use of force when making an arrest

The closer question is whether Officer LeBlanc was justified in his use of nondeadly force to effectuate an arrest or to make the stop of Mr. Williams. In order to overcome a claim of justification that the use of force was necessary to make an arrest, the State is required to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Officer LeBlanc did not reasonably believe his action in using a takedown maneuver against Mr. Williams was necessary to make the arrest.

In this case, Officer LeBlanc told investigators Mr. Williams had committed several offenses, including disorderly conduct, interfering with arrest, and assault. When investigators asked who he believed the assault had been committed against, Officer LeBlanc appeared to reconsider that potential charge, but reiterated that he had planned to arrest Mr. Williams for disorderly conduct for challenging Officer LeBlanc to fight as well as for interfering with arrest. The recordings of the incident show that while Officer LeBlanc may not have told Mr. Williams he was under arrest, he did tell Mr. Williams he

was “going to jail” as he moved Mr. Williams to the patrol car and began trying to handcuff him.

Officer LeBlanc expressed his subjective belief he needed to use the takedown tactic to effectuate the arrest. The officer described, and the video confirms, that Officer LeBlanc repeatedly commanded Mr. Williams to give him his hands as Mr. Williams was positioned against the hood of the car, without success. In his interview, Officer LeBlanc clearly expressed the benefit that having a suspect on the ground provides, as it allows the officer to use leverage over the suspect in a way that was inaccessible to Officer LeBlanc while he was trying to control Mr. Williams on the hood of the patrol vehicle. He also indicated he believed the takedown was a minimal level of force, that he did not expect the result that occurred, and that nothing like that had ever happened when he used the maneuver in the past.

Mr. Williams was clearly injured by the force used against him by Officer LeBlanc, and required being medivaced to Anchorage, followed by several days in the hospital. Officer LeBlanc explained that he did not intend, nor did he expect, for Mr. Williams to be injured due to this takedown mechanism, which he indicated he has used regularly over the course of his career and has been utilized by law enforcement officers as a nondeadly tactic that is not expected to cause serious physical injury. Although Officer LeBlanc’s use of force resulted in apparent serious injury to Mr. Williams, the type of force used was nondeadly, and the resulting injury appears to be a truly unfortunate accident—not an intentional infliction, and not foreseeable. This again establishes the force used was nondeadly, and these explanations demonstrate the officer’s subjective belief the force was necessary and reasonable.

The next question is whether Officer LeBlanc’s belief was reasonable from an objective standpoint. Mr. Williams demonstrated repeated non-compliance with the officers’ commands, first to walk away, and next to refuse to provide the officer with his hands. He had also demonstrated prior aggression towards Officer LeBlanc when he balled his fists at the side of his legs and aggressively yelled “Fuck!” at him. While that conduct does not suggest an imminent assault, it does qualify as probable cause for a challenge to fight. Mr. Williams had also not been patted down at the time Officer LeBlanc was attempting to detain him.

Officer LeBlanc noted Mr. Williams’ strength, indicating that he was unable to overpower Mr. Williams as Mr. Williams struggled against Officer LeBlanc’s efforts to obtain both of Mr. Williams’ hands when they were at the patrol vehicle. The video provides some corroboration of this, as Officer LeBlanc’s ICV shows that despite his attempts to force Mr. Williams’ hands from underneath his body, Officer LeBlanc was unable to do so. While positioned against the hood of the car, Mr. Williams appeared to be struggling against the officer, including by grabbing on to the push bar of the patrol vehicle with his left hand, and using his right hand to push on the hood of the car in order to gain leverage. The video

indicates that Mr. Williams is not merely passively resisting Officer LeBlanc's attempts to obtain his hands, but documents his active struggle against the effort.

Notably, some of Officer LeBlanc's words and actions, including the additional shove to Mr. Williams' back as he was walking away, Officer LeBlanc's threat to "slam" Mr. Williams if he did not give the officer his hands, and the officer's comment after Mr. Williams was unconscious, when he stated, "walking now, huh?", do call into question whether Officer LeBlanc was motivated by something other than just the belief he needed to arrest Mr. Williams. However, based on the totality of the circumstances, including Mr. Williams' resistance and apparent active struggle against Officer LeBlanc's attempts to handcuff him; the officer's knowledge that Mr. Williams had not been patted down and his concern that Mr. Williams might be armed;¹⁴ and his subsequent desire to handcuff Mr. Williams quickly so a pat search could be conducted—it is likely that the State would *not* be able to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Officer LeBlanc was not justified in using nondeadly force for the purposes of making an arrest or stop in this instance.

Other factors

In addition to the above factual analysis, there were other actions related to this matter that have an impact on the State's analysis of its ability to prosecute this case. On August 29, 2025, the City and Borough of Juneau ("CBJ") publicly released the body-worn and in-car video footage of this incident and made public statements about the incident. The release of critical evidence in this investigation occurred despite CBJ and JPD's knowledge that both the AST investigation and OSP's review of the matter were ongoing—and that release of evidence occurred over the explicit objection of both DPS and the Department of Law ("LAW"). The request not to release the material was made for several reasons, including to avoid impacting the integrity of the ongoing investigation, to avoid tainting the potential jury pool, to ensure compliance with Alaska Rules of Professional Conduct 3.6 and 3.8, which apply directly to prosecutors but also extend to law enforcement agencies, and—most importantly—to protect the due process rights of a potential criminal defendant.

The public comments by CBJ and the release of this footage, over the objections of both the prosecution and the independent investigating agency, raise significant concerns for future cases and impairs the prosecution's ability to hold officers accountable for criminal conduct when the evidence warrants it. In particular, the dissemination of critical pieces of evidence in a public forum related to the prosecution of this case jeopardizes the ability to secure a fair and impartial jury within the Juneau community.¹⁵ Because critical pieces of

¹⁴ Although a general concern that someone may have a weapon may not be sufficient to warrant a justification of self-defense, the potential that a suspect has access to a weapon is a factor that officers should consider in determining whether force is warranted, and if so, what level of force. *See generally, Graham v. Connor*, 490 U.S. 386, 109 S.Ct. 1865 (U.S. Sup. 1989).

¹⁵ Although the video taken by I.B. had been released prior to CBJ's release of the ICV and BWC footage, the dissemination of evidence by a private citizen is viewed differently than when evidence is publicly

evidence have been disseminated in a public forum related to the prosecution, it is likely that, if charges were filed, the case would need to be prosecuted in another venue to ensure a fair and impartial jury could be selected.

CBJ's decision to release the evidence prior to the closure of the investigation and review was potentially done at the expense of holding an officer accountable in criminal court. While LAW understands the need for transparency and the importance of having conversations with the public following incidents with law enforcement officers, these goals could have been accomplished while still safeguarding Officer LeBlanc's due process rights by merely delaying the release of the BWC footage, as requested by both AST and LAW.

As discussed in the letter DPS Commissioner Cockrell sent to you on September 10, 2025, the decision to release the camera footage over the objection of AST and LAW, particularly after CBJ requested DPS's assistance, appears to indicate a lack of a serious intent to allow for an independent review of the potential criminal charges in this matter. It may also impact the analysis in future cases. LAW again urges CBJ to reconsider its policy on releasing body-worn camera footage and related context before a determination has been made on whether to pursue a criminal prosecution.

Conclusion

The State will not file criminal charges against JPD Officer Brandon LeBlanc relating to the July 30, 2025 use of nondeadly force against Christopher Williams, Jr. in Juneau, Alaska. Please contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at 907.269.6250 or jenna.gruenstein@alaska.gov.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN COX
ATTORNEY GENERAL



Jenna L. Gruenstein
Chief Assistant Attorney General
Office of Special Prosecutions

CC:

Mera Matthews, Counsel for Brandon LeBlanc

disseminated by a governmental entity and/or law enforcement agency. Moreover, the initial video shared by I.B. was relatively short; the additional footage provided critical new information, most notably the audio of what Officer LeBlanc said to Williams before, during and after the incident—which provides important state of mind evidence that also had a high likelihood of inflaming potential jurors.