

ADDRESSING POLICE BRUTALITY AND SYSTEMIC RACISM AGAINST THE BLACK COMMUNITY



The tragic and brutal death of George Floyd has been a wake-up call for millions of Americans about the ongoing crisis of police brutality against people of color, especially Black Americans. Police have shot and killed nearly 1,000 people in the past year and African Americans are more than twice as likely to be victims of deadly force by the police than white people. Black men between the ages of 15 and 34 are approximately 10 times more likely to be killed by police than other Americans. Across the nation and around the world, the streets have been lined with protesters demanding fundamental change in the culture of law enforcement and meaningful accountability for officers who commit misconduct.

Black Lives Matter. George Floyd matters. Breonna Taylor matters. Tony McDade, Eric Garner, Amadou Diallo, Tamir Rice, Walter Scott, LaQuan McDonald, and Rayshard Brooks matter. And the countless other people who have lost their lives at the hands of law enforcement matter. Yet, our laws have not reflected this fact.

That is why the Judiciary Committee, along with the Congressional Black Caucus, crafted the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which passed the Committee and the House of Representatives. This bill would finally allow for meaningful accountability in cases of police misconduct and would begin the process of reimagining policing in the 21st Century.

This is not a new problem. Our country's history of racism and racially motivated violence—rooted in the original sin of slavery—continues to haunt our nation. That is why since the beginning of this Congress, the House Judiciary Committee has been working to address the lasting legacy of slavery and lynching, the disproportionate impact of our nation's marijuana laws on the Black community, and the disturbing prevalence of White Nationalism in the country.



COMMITTEE WORK

H.R. 7120, the “George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020” [Marked Up, Passed House]

H.R. 35, the “Emmett Till Antilynching Act” [Marked Up, Passed House]

H.R. 1636/S. 2163, the “Commission on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys Act” [Passed House, LAW]*

H.R. 3884, the “Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement (MORE) Act of 2019” [Marked Up]

H.R. 5602, the “Domestic Terrorism Prevention Act of 2020” [Marked Up]

Hearing: Oversight Hearing on Policing Practices (2019)

Hearing: Oversight Hearing on Policing Practices and Law Enforcement Accountability (2020)

Hearing: H.R. 40 and the Path to Restorative Justice

Hearing: Hate Crimes and the Rise of White Nationalism

Hearing: Marijuana Laws in America: Racial Justice and the Need for Reform

Spotlight: The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act makes it easier for the federal government to successfully prosecute police misconduct cases, effectively bans chokeholds, ends racial and religious profiling, encourages prosecutions independent from local police, and eliminates the dubious court-made doctrine of qualified immunity in civil rights lawsuits against law enforcement officers. At the same time, it works to prevent police violence and bias through a series of ‘front-end’ approaches aimed at encouraging departments to meet a gold standard in training, hiring, de-escalation strategies, bystander duty, use of body cameras, and other best practices. It also ends no-knock warrants in drug cases, stops the militarization of local policing, and requires the collection of data on a number of key policing matters, which would be made public—including the first-ever national database on police-misconduct incidents to prevent the movement of dangerous officers from department to department. Lastly, it creates a new grant program for community-based organizations to create local commissions and task forces on policing innovation to reimagine how public safety could work in a truly equitable and just way in each community.