



BLACK MILLENNIAL  
CONVENTION

June 7, 2020

Honorable Karen Bass, (CA)  
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus  
2059 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Justice in Policing Act of 2020**

Dear Chair Bass,

On behalf of the Black Millennial Convention (BMC), we the undersigned would like to register our unequivocal support for the Justice in Policing Act of 2020. Civil rights remain the unfinished business of the United States of America. For the past four plus centuries, Black people have continuously been made to endure unfair, unjust and inhumane treatment in this country. We have been made to believe in that if we worked hard, never complained and accepted what the world offered that would be enough. What the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless others have taught us is that, obedience will never be enough; liberty and justice for all applies to everyone but us; and by us, we mean Black Americans, African Americans, Afro-Americans, or plainly put, Black people.

We live in a racially structured society, and that is what causes racial inequity. Racial inequity looks the same across systems. Socio-economic differences do not explain away racial inequity. Inequitable systems limit people's choices, access, and opportunities, and in its most pernicious manifestation, these systems lead to murder. Since ships over-filled with enslaved Africans first docked on the shores of America, 401 years ago, Black people have always been thought of, viewed and treated as less than human—no more than capital and commodities. From enslavement, the ⅔ Compromise, sharecropping, Jim Crow, Black exploitation, segregation, racial discrimination in education and hiring practices, redlining of communities, racial and religious profiling, police brutality to mass incarceration, Black people continue to provide America with life support, as she seeks to only take life from us.

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, and thus we also include work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that devalue or fail to protect Black lives. Accordingly, we are pleased at the thoughtful and serious nature by which you all have sought to provide the appropriate first steps in Congressional response to the long withstanding American pandemic of racism through the Justice in Policing Act of 2020.

It is unbelievable to us that in 2020, that the penance for the heinous crime of lynching, is still being manipulated. We stand firmly, with the Congressional Black Caucus and the House Judiciary Committee in adding language that underscores the needed clarification as it relates to the crime of lynching. We too, believe those who choose to conspire with those who violate sections 245, 247, or 249 of Title IV of the Justice in Policing Act of 2020 or section 901 of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. Section 3631) should be punished in the same manner.

We believe that as the nation works toward comprehensive solutions that account for public, private and government resolve, the measures you have outlined in your legislation as it relates to police accountability, especially around demilitarizing local and state police departments; outlawing chokeholds and carotid holds; banning no-knock warrants in drug cases, amending, 18 U.S.C. Section 242 to allow for the prosecution of police misconduct from "willingness" to "recklessness" standard; and reforms on qualified immunity to allow for retribution to be paid to individuals who have had their constitutional rights violated by police. We also believe that it is imperative that this country improves its use of pattern and practice investigations at the federal level, specifically as it relates to granting the Department of Justice the subpoena power it needs to justly investigate crimes involving law enforcement. We also find it necessary to extend that same authority by way of incentives to state attorney generals to conduct similar patterns and practice investigations that will allow for America to move one step closer in living her creed of "liberty and justice for all."

We further applaud the recommendation to incentivize states to hold independent investigations into police involved deaths; as well as the establishment of the National Police Misconduct Registry. These proposals suggest to the community and the nation that our leaders hear the call of the people, and recognize that the time for comprehensive policing reforms is now.

In 2019, 24% of all police killings were committed against Black Americans, whereas, we only make up 13% of the entire U.S. population. There is a deep racial imparity when it comes to police-related violence against Black people in this country. According to Mapping Police Violence, there is little to no punishment for the unlawful taking of Black lives by police officers. In fact, 99% of all officers involved in all police killings had no criminal charges pressed against them.

Black millennials comprise 25% of the total Black U.S. population and are projected to exceed \$200 billion in spending power, yet we are 2.5 times more likely to die at the hands of police than our white counterparts and ironically, we are 50% less likely to be armed during the time of death.

As an organization, it is our sworn obligation to advocate for equity for Black people and speak up in the fight for Black lives. Our story in America begins with the trauma of violence: the brutality of enslavement, unpaid and underpaid labor, land theft, and discrimination, but through action and radical transformation real change and betterment for Black lives can be realized.

It is in this spirit that the Black Millennial Convention urges unanimous bicameral support of the Justice in Policing Act of 2020. We still have hope in an America that can live up to her greatest ideal, that all men/women/people are created equal. We also have hope that this piece of legislation is the step we need to begin on the journey of making justice a reality.

Should you all have any questions please feel free to contact any of our Steering Committee members at [info@blackmillennialconvention.com](mailto:info@blackmillennialconvention.com).

Sincerely,

### **The Black Millennial Convention Steering Committee**

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### About the Black Millennial Convention

*The Black Millennial Convention (BMC) is a nonpartisan, 501(c) 3 organization convening Millennials of African descent from across the country and the diaspora to advance racial equity, increase Black political power, and expand civic engagement.*