

June 16, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn H.O.B.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, United States Senate
317 Russell S.O.B.
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader, United States Senate
322 Hart S.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for the Justice in Policing Act of 2020

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer,

As the mayors of America's cities we write to you in strong support of The Justice in Policing Act of 2020 (H.R. 7120/S. 3912). In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many other innocent lives lost, we commit to bringing our voices to Washington and join Congress in pursuit of the changes America needs to end the pattern of brutality and discrimination.

We as Mayors of some of America's largest cities, stand in strong support of the Congressional Black Caucus' proposal to bring transparency and accountability to police forces across the nation. In the words of the caucus, we commit to countering the "persistent, unchecked bias in policing" accompanied by a "history of lack of accountability that is wreaking havoc on the Black community." We want to make it clear: we cannot lose this momentum for national police reform. The current and historic injustices to African Americans must be stopped. In the spirit of this long-overdue change, it is time for structural reform with meaningful policy, including:

- Making a number of changes to how officers are trained, as well as how they conduct themselves during interactions with the public;
- Revising federal statutes that protect police officers and when they can be charged with using excessive force, and whether they can be sued for such behavior, by changing the

federal standard from “willful” to “knowingly or with reckless disregard,” as well as altering the language covering when such illegal acts are found to have resulted in someone’s death;

- Limiting the “qualified immunity” for police officers to enable individuals to recover damages when law enforcement officers violate their constitutional rights;
- Creating a national police misconduct registry to ensure that officers who commit misconduct are not moved from one department to another despite a history of bad conduct;
- End racial and religious profiling practices by police including the requirement that officers receive federally certified trainings on racial bias and the duty to intervene;
- Banning no-knock warrants in drug cases;
- Ending the use of chokeholds and carotid holds;
- Changing the standard to evaluate whether law enforcement use of force was justified from whether the force was reasonable to whether the force was necessary;
- Limit the transfer of military grade equipment to state and local police departments;
- Require uniformed federal law-enforcement officer to wear body cameras;
- Prioritizing the use of federal funds to make the use of such cameras more widespread for state and local police.

It is critical that Congress enact these reforms to promote the safety and constitutional rights of our citizens. We must act on the promise to eradicate racism in our hearts and in our policies, our funding priorities, and throughout our society.

We must rise to meet the historic nature of this moment and finally bring an end to the atrocities and injustices that have plagued the African American community for far too long. We believe that the Justice in Policing Act of 2020 is a critical first step in this process.

Sincerely,

Mayor Sylvester Turner, City of Houston, TX
Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles, CA
Mayor Jacob Frey, City of Minneapolis, MN
Mayor Jenny A. Durkan, City of Seattle, WA
Mayor Ron Nirenberg, City of San Antonio, TX
Mayor London Breed, City of San Francisco, CA
Mayor Michael B. Hancock, City of Denver, CO
Mayor Steve Adler, City of Austin, TX
Mayor Libby Schaff, City of Oakland, CA
Mayor Ted Wheeler, City of Portland, OR
Mayor Victoria Woodards, City of Tacoma, WA
Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, City of Madison, WI
Mayor Regina Romero, City of Tucson, AZ
Mayor John Cooper, City of Nashville, TN
Mayor Rusty Bailey, City of Riverside, CA

Cc: The Honorable Jerrold Nadler, Chair, House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Jim Jordan, Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Lindsey Graham, Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Senator Cory Booker (D-New Jersey)
The Honorable Senator Kamala Harris (D-California)
The Honorable Karen Bass, California's 37th Congressional District