



## A Resolution Condemning Police Brutality

*The Time is Now for Congress to Condemn Police Brutality and Take Action to Save Lives*

### **Background**

It is time for Congress to decisively condemn police brutality. Police brutality and the use of excessive and militarized force are among the most serious ongoing human rights and civil liberties violations in the United States and have led to community destabilization, a decrease in public safety, and the exacerbation of structural inequities. Over the last two decades, the number of police killings has increased dramatically. Since 2013, police officers have shot and killed roughly 1000 people each year.<sup>1</sup> The rise in police brutality, racial profiling and excessive use of force has come at a disproportionately high cost to communities of color. The continued militarization of law enforcement agencies has only further exacerbated and contributed to the crisis of police brutality and violence in communities across the nation.

### **Police Brutality by the Numbers**

- Police brutality and violence is now a leading cause of death among young men, particularly Black young men who are nearly three times more likely to be killed by police than their white peers.<sup>2</sup>
- Over the course of 2019, 1,099 people were killed by police. There were only 27 days in 2019 where we didn't lose a life due to police brutality and violence.<sup>3</sup>
- Latino men are almost twice as likely to be killed by police use of force and Black and Latino women and girls and Native Americans are also killed by police at disproportionately higher rates.<sup>4</sup>
- Nearly half of all individuals killed by police are people with disabilities.<sup>5</sup>
- LGBTQ+ individuals and those experiencing homelessness are also significantly more likely to be criminalized and the target of police violence. Transgender individuals are 3.7 times more likely to experience police violence compared to cisgender survivors and victims.<sup>6</sup>
- Between 2013 and 2019, 99% of killings by police did not result in officers being charged with a crime.<sup>7</sup>
- Police are twice as likely to use force against people of color than white residents.<sup>8</sup>

### **Police Militarization**

- Close to 70% of Americans live under the jurisdiction of a local law enforcement agency equipped with military weapons.<sup>9</sup>
- SWAT teams, intended to serve as response teams in emergency scenarios such as hostage or barricade situations, are now most frequently deployed to conduct residence drug searches more than any other emergency incidents.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Masera, Federico. "Bringing War Home: Violent Crime, Police Killings and the Overmilitarization of the US Police." SSRN Electronic Journal, (November 8, 2016). <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2851522>.

<sup>2</sup> Edwards, Frank, Hedwig Lee, and Michael Esposito. "Risk of Being Killed by Police Use of Force in the United States by Age, Race-Ethnicity, and Sex." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 116, no. 34 (August 5, 2019): 16793-98. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1821204116>.

<sup>3</sup> "Mapping Police Violence," (May 28, 2020), <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Edwards, Frank, Hedwig Lee, and Michael Esposito. "Risk of Being Killed by Police Use of Force in the United States by Age, Race-Ethnicity, and Sex." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 116, no. 34 (August 5, 2019): 16793-98.

<sup>5</sup> David Perry and Lawrence Carter-Long, "The Ruderman White Paper on Media Coverage of Law Enforcement Use of Force and Disability," Ruderman Family Foundation, (March, 2016) [http://rudermanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MediaStudy-PoliceDisability\\_final-final.pdf](http://rudermanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/MediaStudy-PoliceDisability_final-final.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> New York City Anti-Violence Project, Hate Violence Against Transgender Communities Fact Sheet (May 28, 2020) [https://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ncavp\\_transhvfactsheet.pdf](https://avp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ncavp_transhvfactsheet.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> "Mapping Police Violence," (May 28, 2020), <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

<sup>8</sup> Jones, Alexi, "Police Stops are Still Marred by Racial Discrimination, New Data Shows," (October 12, 2018) Prison Policy Initiative <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2018/10/12/policing/>

<sup>9</sup> Masera, Federico. "Bringing War Home: Violent Crime, Police Killings and the Overmilitarization of the US Police." SSRN Electronic Journal, November 8, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2851522>.

<sup>10</sup> "War Comes Home: The Excessive Militarization of American Police." ACLU. ACLU, August 8, 2017. <https://www.aclu.org/report/war-comes-home-excessive-militarization-american-police>.



### **Police Violence**

In recent years, the killings of Eric Harris, Anthony Hill, Oscar Grant, Aiyana Jones, DJ Henry, Rekia Boyd, Eric Garner, John Crawford, Michael Brown, Dontre Hamilton, Akai Gurley, Laquan McDonald, Tamir Rice, Antonio Zambrano-Montes, Lavall Hall, Freddie Gray, William Chapman, Sandra Bland, Sam Dubose, Jamar Clark, Mario Woods, Greg Gunn, Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Korryn Gaines, Terence Crutcher, Keith Lamont Scott, Alfred Olango, Deborah Danner, Terrence Coleman, Jocques Clemmons, Walter Scott, Jordan Edwards, Charleena Lyles, Stephon Clark, Antwon Rose, Botham Jean, Atatiana Jefferson, Dreasjon Reed, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Tony McDade, and hundreds of others, and the demonstrations that followed have brought sustained national attention to the racially biased police violence against people in the United States.

### **Condemning Police Brutality and Calling for Action to Save Lives**

In response to the horrendous rise of police violence and militarization in our communities, Representative Ayanna Pressley, along with Representative Ilhan Omar, Representative Karen Bass and Representative Barbara Lee have introduced [legislation condemning police brutality](#), racial profiling, the use of excessive and militarized force and calling for systemic reforms necessary to stem the epidemic of police violence against marginalized communities. Specifically, the resolution:

- Condemns all acts of brutality and the use of excessive force by law enforcement officers and calls for the end of militarized policing practices in our communities;
- Supports efforts to eliminate the use of force, conduct stringent oversight and investigations and hold individual law enforcement officers and police departments accountable for police brutality, racial profiling and violence;
- Calls on the Department of Justice to reinstitute its authority to investigate individual instances of police brutality, racial profiling as well as police departments that repeatedly violate civil rights;
- Supports meaningful local and community led transparency and oversight efforts, including all-civilian review boards with the authority to effectively investigate incidents of police misconduct.
- Calls for the adoption of sound and unbiased law enforcement policies at all levels of government to reduce the disparate impact of police brutality and use of force on Black and Brown people and other historically marginalized communities.

### **Endorsements**

The resolution is endorsed by The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, National Action Network, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, ACLU, ACLU of Massachusetts, ACLU of Minnesota, The Justice Collaborative, Color of Change, The National Urban League, Lawyers for Civil Rights, Black and Pink, Boston Chapter, Center for Popular Democracy, Moms Rising, Drug Policy Alliance, New Florida Majority, PolicyLink, The National Black Police Association, and Vera Institute of Justice.