

Durbin, Duckworth Join Booker, Harris, Colleagues To Introduce Justice In Policing Act Of 2020

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) today joined Senators Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Kamala Harris (D-CA), Congressional Black Caucus Chair Karen Bass (D-CA), and House Judiciary Committee Chair Jerrold Nadler (D-NY) to introduce the *Justice in Policing Act of 2020*, the first-ever bold, comprehensive approach to hold police accountable, change the culture of law enforcement, and build trust between law enforcement and our communities.

“We cannot call ourselves a land of justice until we address fundamental issues of racial injustice. Those who abuse the power of policing at the expense of others, particularly Black and Brown communities, have no place in law enforcement in America. That clear line must be drawn. But we also need to stand by the good, professional police

who risk their lives every day for our families and loved ones. We need to prohibit police conduct that is discriminatory and deadly, using force far beyond what is necessary. We must recruit and train the next generation of law enforcement to protect us and serve everyone in America. And we need to invest in social services that focus on de-escalation and redirection from a criminal justice system fraught with racial disparities,” Durbin said. “I’m proud to cosponsor this legislation with my colleagues to create meaningful policing reforms and change. But a set of policies will not erase generations of systemic racism. We must continue this conversation and actively work to build a more just and equitable America.”

“We cannot let ourselves accept that in the United States of America, in the year 2020, black men and women are still being publicly executed without judge or jury in tragic and preventable police-involved deaths,” said Duckworth. “Families like George Floyd’s, Breonna Taylor’s and Laquan McDonald’s that have experienced heartbreak are no less deserving of justice than any other family, but too often they don’t get it. I’m proud to join my Democratic colleagues to introduce this comprehensive police reform legislation that includes provisions of my bill to promote objective and independent investigations into police-involved use of deadly force. It’s time our country acts to ensure accountability within our law enforcement agencies and provide justice to those who have lost loved ones.”

The *Justice in Policing Act of 2020*:

- Prohibits federal, state, and local law enforcement from racial, religious and discriminatory profiling, and mandates training on racial, religious, and discriminatory profiling for all law enforcement.
- Bans chokeholds, carotid holds and no-knock warrants at the federal level and limits the transfer of military-grade equipment to state and local law enforcement.
- Mandates the use of dashboard cameras and body cameras for federal offices and requires state and local law enforcement to use existing federal funds to ensure the use of police body cameras.
- Establishes a National Police Misconduct Registry to prevent problematic officers who are fired or leave on agency from moving to another jurisdiction without any accountability.
- Amends federal criminal statute from “willfulness” to a “recklessness” standard to successfully identify and prosecute police misconduct.

- Reforms qualified immunity so that individuals are not barred from recovering damages when police violate their constitutional rights.
- Establishes public safety innovation grants for community-based organizations to create local commissions and task forces to help communities to re-imagine and develop concrete, just and equitable public safety approaches.
- Creates law enforcement development and training programs to develop best practices and requires the creation of law enforcement accreditation standard recommendations based on President Obama's Taskforce on 21st Century policing.
- Requires state and local law enforcement agencies to report use of force data, disaggregated by race, sex, disability, religion, age.
- Improves the use of pattern and practice investigations at the federal level by granting the Department of Justice Civil Rights Division subpoena power and creates a grant program for state attorneys general to develop authority to conduct independent investigations into problematic police departments.
- Establishes a Department of Justice task force to coordinate the investigation, prosecution and enforcement efforts of federal, state and local governments in cases related to law enforcement misconduct.

In addition to Durbin, Duckworth, Booker, and Harris, co-sponsors of the *Justice in Policing Act of 2020* in the Senate are Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tom Carper (D-DE), Bob Casey (D-PA), Chris Coons (D-DE), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Chris Murphy (D-CA), Patty Murray (D-WA), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Tina Smith (D-MN), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tom Udall (D-NM), Mark Warner (D-VA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

The *Justice in Policing Act of 2020* has the support of a broad coalition of civil rights organizations including: Demand Progress, Lawyers' Committee For Civil Rights Under Law, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, National Action Network, National African American Clergy Network, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP), Black Millennial Convention, and the National Urban League.

“The National African American Clergy Network supports the Justice in Policing Bill. It affirms sacred scripture that everyone is created in the image of God and deserves to be protected by police sworn to value and safeguard all lives. Failure by police to uphold this sacred trust with Black Americans lives, requires systemic changes in policing nationwide,” said Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Dr. Otis Moss, Jr., Dr. T. DeWitt Smith, Jr., Co-Conveners, The National African American Clergy Network (NAACN).

“It's time to close the chapter on a dark era of unchecked police violence in our country that has wreaked havoc on African American families across the country. The Justice in Policing Act is historic and long overdue legislation that will put our country on a path to reform. This Act is responsive to many of the urgent demands being pressed for by our communities and by the people protesting for racial justice and equity across our nation. The Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law commends the Congressional Black Caucus for their leadership on policing reform and this critical legislation, including Chair Karen Bass, Senator Cory Booker and Senator Kamala Harris,” said Kristen Clarke, President and Executive Director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

“Sometimes difficult circumstances present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring about historic change,” said Marc H. Morial, President and CEO of the National Urban League. “The brutal actions of police in George Floyd’s death in Minneapolis, along with botched execution of a no-knock warrant that killed Breonna Taylor in Louisville, and the brazen vigilante execution of Ahmaud Arbery in Glynn County, Georgia, have pushed the nation to the tipping point.”

“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,” said Waikinya J.S.Clanton, MBA Black Millennial Convention.