



**For Immediate Release**  
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**LDF Urges President Biden to Veto Resolution to Strike Down Washington D.C.'s Policing Reform Act, Expresses Disappointment at Veto of Revised Criminal Code**

Today, the leaders of the Legal Defense Fund (LDF), the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Color of Change, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, NAACP, National Action Network (NAN), and the National Urban League sent [a letter](#) to President Biden urging him to clearly and publicly oppose a pending resolution of disapproval that would strike down a recent Washington D.C. policing reform bill, and to veto the resolution should it make it to his desk.

The resolution of disapproval (H.J. Res. 42), which is now before the House, would strike down the District's Comprehensive Policing and Justice Reform Amendment Act of 2022 (CPJRAA), a measure which enacted police transparency and accountability measures, not unlike those in President Biden's Executive Order, Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Strengthen Public Safety. The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability will hold a hearing on the resolution on Wednesday, March 29.

LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai S. Nelson issued the following statement denouncing federal efforts to overrule legislation passed by the D.C. City Council and urging President Biden to do the same:

"We call on the President to publicly oppose H.J. Res. 42 and veto the bill should it pass. The resolution would strike down Washington D.C.'s Comprehensive Policing Justice Reform Amendment Act (CPJRAA). The CPJRAA's reforms not only echo many of the Biden Administration's own stated policies and goals, but they also reflect the continued need to address the alarming incidence of police killings of Black people and other people of color in America.

"We must not ignore that this resolution is yet another troubling example of a legislature overreaching and overriding the democratic will of a majority-Black locality. It's imperative that we center the communities these policies are meant to protect, respect their expertise, and allow them to exercise their own autonomy. We urge Congress and the President to respect the will of the District's residents, as exercised through their democratically-elected representatives.

"We need to invest in solutions, not be misled by headlines. To advance safety and justice, we must support evidence-based solutions that improve public safety by investing in communities, restorative justice, and alternatives that are not rooted in racial subjugation, reliant on expansive criminalization, or disproportionately target communities of color."

LDF Associate Director-Counsel Tona Boyd also issued the following statement:

“H.J. Res. 42 follows an earlier resolution of disapproval (H.J. Res. 26), recently signed into law by President Biden, which struck down the District’s Revised Criminal Code Act of 2022. It was disappointing to see President Biden sign H.J. Res. 26, which overturned an effort to update the District’s antiquated criminal code and bring it in line with the laws in other states. The City Council is now forced to walk back sixteen years of important work to address outdated criminal sentencing and penalties. Research has shown that longer sentences do not deter crime . Instead, these harsh sentences serve to subjugate and further marginalize Black communities and other communities of color.

“We urge President Biden to follow through on his commitment to honor the autonomy and democratic decision-making of District residents and advance common-sense police accountability measures by opposing H.J. Res. 42.”

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*Founded in 1940, the Legal Defense Fund (LDF) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.*