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Civil Rights Leaders Demand Results in George Floyd Justice in Policing Act Negotiations

We appreciate the efforts of lawmakers leading the negotiations around the *George Floyd Justice in Policing Act*. We were heartened to see the U.S. House of Representatives pass a strong version of the bill last year and again this year. Yet, more than a year after George Floyd was murdered and weeks after a draft bill was circulated, the U.S. Senate still has not agreed on key provisions of the bill. Congress must deliver justice. We collectively demand that Congress honor its commitment to produce a final bill that can pass the House and Senate before the end of June and ensure a strong *George Floyd Justice in Policing Act* is passed before the August recess.

The nation desperately needs a transformation of policing policies and practices -- from inner cities to suburban neighborhoods to rural counties. The only way to begin this process is with federal legislation that sets meaningful standards and removes legal impediments to holding officers accountable for unconstitutional policing practices. The *George Floyd Justice in Policing Act* was conceived and created with a focus on accountability and contains provisions overwhelmingly supported by the American people. This vital civil rights legislation is long overdue.

There are many in law enforcement who agree that meaningful change is necessary. However, there are a few factions within the law enforcement community who do not want meaningful change or accountability. They are committed to standing in the way of a bill moving forward, and their allies in Congress are allowing this obstruction to happen.

Law enforcement should not dictate the terms of, or have the power to stall, comprehensive police accountability legislation. The murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Elijah McClain, the violent assaults of Jacob Blake, Rodney King, Abner Louima and of too many others in communities of color were caused by a culture that allows police officers to act with

impunity by failing to hold them accountable for their actions. The logical and necessary response is strong civil rights legislation that breaks through this culture to create meaningful change.

Congress must pass a strong police accountability measure that will address misconduct head-on, not a bill that tinkers around the edges of justice and responsibility. Meaningful legislation must hold police officers accountable for acts of excessive force, sexual misconduct, and obstruction of justice. It must put in place a path for those impacted by police misconduct to seek justice in our court system and external oversight measures that hold both officers and municipalities accountable. It must deter misconduct by allowing liability and damages that take into account the seriousness of these crimes. It must require data collection on police misconduct and set national standards for policing. It must ensure that the Department of Justice has the tools it needs to enforce the nation's civil rights laws when they are violated by law enforcement officers.

After so many took to the streets to peacefully march for justice for George Floyd and too many others, Congress must make good on its promise to the nation to meaningfully reform policing. The nation is tired of waiting. Congress must move forward on negotiations by the end of this month and pass a strong *George Floyd Justice in Policing Act* before leaving for August recess.