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Barriers to Police Accountability Have Not Been Addressed at the Federal Level, Civil Rights Groups Urge Congress to Act

Leaders Demand Meaningful Legislation from Congress

(WASHINGTON) – Prominent civil rights group leaders and the family of George Floyd demand that Congress address police accountability and police violence in the wake of the continued brutalization and killing of Black people. The following is a joint statement from leaders of those groups:

“Last year, millions of Americans in nearly every state came together to protest police brutality against Black communities and to demand change. People from all walks of life were collectively horrified by the murder of George Floyd, and the lack of accountability for state-sanctioned violence against Black people, including the killings of Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, Elijah McClain, and many others.

“Black communities disproportionately feel the pain of police violence in America and for far too long our federal institutions have failed to address the continued issue of police violence. Congress must heed the calls-to-action and immediately pass legislation that is grounded in principles that will remove barriers to accountability and lead to real change in the behavior of law enforcement.

“In order for legislation addressing police brutality and misconduct to truly meet this moment, it must contain a strong accountability framework, including both criminal and civil penalties for misconduct and changes to police practices and policies. This includes ending qualified immunity, increasing the U.S. Department of Justice's authority to prosecute misconduct by law enforcement officers, creating a national registry of police misconduct, establishing a national use-of-force standard, providing relief for discriminatory policing; ending the transfer of military-grade equipment to state and local law enforcement, banning no-knock and quick-knock warrants, and restricting funds to law enforcement agencies that do not prohibit the use of chokeholds.

“In America, there can be no trust without accountability, no accountability without transparency, and no healing without justice.

“We urge Congress to heed the calls for justice and accountability that continue to echo throughout the nation, and to pass a comprehensive policing bill that ensures meaningful accountability for police misconduct.”

This statement was co-authored by:

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