

March 1, 2021

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of YWCA USA, a network of over 200 local associations in 45 states and the District of Columbia, **I write to you to express our support for the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 1280)**. This bill would take initial steps towards police accountability for unconstitutional and unethical conduct. **YWCA USA urges you to vote yes when it comes to the floor for a vote.**

For over 160 years, YWCA has been on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. Today, we serve over 2 million women, girls and family members of all ages and backgrounds in more than 1,200 communities. As the largest network of domestic violence and sexual assault service providers and an organization grounded in our mission, YWCA approaches the issues of policing practice and law enforcement accountability from a unique vantage point. We see both the moral imperative for change and recognize the critical role that law enforcement so often plays in protecting women and children from domestic and sexual violence. We see the ways in which Black women and other women of color are criminalized, profiled, and harmed by systems, laws, and policies that are supposed to provide support and protection—and at the same time we rely on those very same systems, laws, and policies to aid so many of the women, children, and families we serve each year. We see clearly how racism shows up in all facets of life, and that the very same law enforcement, social service, education, healthcare, and court systems that in some situations protect our clients are also deeply entrenched with systemic and structural racism, and that they fuel racially-disparate contact with child welfare, juvenile justice, and criminal justice systems.

It is from this vantage point that we unequivocally affirm our long-standing and valued partnership with law enforcement, but we cannot and must not allow another Black life to be taken from us by police violence. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act takes important, foundational steps to implement long overdue police accountability measures that get to the underlying systems, policies, and structures that reinforce and embed racism in our justice system. YWCA is committed to the success of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act and is particularly grateful for the following provisions, which are of particular importance to us:

- A ban on racial profiling by federal, state, and local law enforcement;
- Mechanisms to strengthen pattern and practice investigations by the Department of Justice (DOJ) and state attorneys general;
- The creation of a national police misconduct registry;

- Limitations on the transfer of military equipment to local law enforcement agencies; and
- Improved data collection on the use of force by law enforcement.

While the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act is a significant first step toward instituting much needed reform, Congress must not stop here. Increasing federal resources and investments in schools, child care, and early learning, trauma-informed care, mental and behavioral health, affordable housing, job training, and other programs and services that have long been underfunded in Black and Brown communities are essential steps in strengthening communities. Additionally, building communities that support people is key to creating justice and wellbeing. Such a shift in funding priorities would directly address deeply embedded inequities that perpetuate racial injustice, and reform the systems, structures, and policies that are the backdrop against which the crisis of police violence and brutality is playing out. **We urge Congress to take the next steps towards implementing these critical reforms and welcome the opportunity to work with YWCAs across the country to help realize these lasting changes.**

The 2020 killing of George Floyd sparked a year of national protests in all 50 states calling for an end to police brutality against Black and Brown communities and a demand for accountability in every sector of law enforcement. Today we stand at a critical moment in time and call on Congress to take bold action and speak out against injustice. As the vote comes to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives, YWCA USA urges you to vote yes on the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 1280) and looks forward to working with you to strengthen and continue instituting real and meaningful change.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please feel free to contact Pam Yuen, YWCA USA Director of Government Relations, at pyuen@ywca.org or 202-559-7022 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Catherine V. Beane
Vice President of Public Policy & Advocacy