



FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO IMPROVE POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

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H.Res 988 - Condemning all acts of police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force throughout the country

Category: Police Accountability

Summary: This resolution would condemn all acts of brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive force by law enforcement officers and calls for the end of militarized policing practices, calls for improved oversight and independent investigations to hold police accountable, calls on DOJ to investigate all acts of racial profiling, police brutality & violence as civil rights violations, calls for the establishment of all-civilian review boards to investigate police misconduct at a community level. Citizen review boards help provide oversight by having non-police officers involved in investigations into officer complaints. They are sometimes also used to conduct internal affairs investigations. However, in some places, police union contracts place restrictions on the amount of oversight that can be provided by these boards.

H.Res 988 - End Qualified Immunity Act

Category: Police Accountability

Summary: This bill would end the qualified immunity doctrine which prevents police from being held legally accountable when they break the law. This is a judge-made doctrine (meaning it is not in the law). Police are immune from liability unless the person whose rights they violated can show that there is a previous case in the same jurisdiction, involving the exact same facts, (basically identical) in which a court deemed the actions to be a constitutional violation. Weird catch-22 because precedent is still not established.

H.R. 4359 - Police Exercising Absolute Care for Everyone Act (PEACE)

Category: Use of Force

Summary: This bill would establish a national use of force standard to require that federal law enforcement use lethal force as the absolute last resort. Currently, police can legally use lethal force if their conduct is considered “reasonable” in that moment. This definition is open to broad interpretation, which again makes it very difficult to hold police accountable. 41 states have law that govern how and when police can use force against civilians, yet few states require police to exhaust reasonable options before resorting to deadly force. As we saw with George Floyd, the officers just stood by and did not intervene. Unfortunately, in many places they are not required to do so.

H.R. 1714 - Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act

Category: Militarization

Summary: This bill would limit the free transfer of military equipment like weapons, explosives, long-range listening devices, and tanks from the Department of Defense to local law enforcement agencies.

H.R. 125 - Police Training and Independent Review Act

Category: Independent Investigations/ Police Accountability/Training

Summary: This bill would authorize the Department of Justice to award grants to states that do the following: (1) require law enforcement officers to be trained on diversity and sensitivity, and (2) require an independent prosecutor to be appointed to investigate and prosecute an alleged offense involving the use of deadly force by a law enforcement officer that results in a death or injury.

H.R. 119 - National Statistics on Deadly Force Transparency Act

Category: Data Collection

Summary: This bill would create an enforcement mechanism to compel law enforcement departments to submit certain data on deadly force; DOJ must reduce by 10% the allocation of funds under the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program for a state or local government that fails to substantially comply.

H.R. 119 - Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act

Category: Police Training

Summary: The bill would authorize the Department of Justice to work cooperatively with independent accreditation, law enforcement and community-based organizations to further develop and refine the accreditation standards. It would also authorize the Attorney General to make grants to law enforcement agencies for the purpose of obtaining accreditation from certified law enforcement accreditation organizations. Purpose is to have well trained and managed police departments.

H.R. 119 - Bend Towards Justice Act

Category: Police Accountability

Summary: This bill would lower the standard of proof in civil rights cases and would require prosecutors to show that the officer acted *recklessly* in depriving an individual of their rights as opposed to *willfully*.

H.R. 2927 - The Preventing Tragedies Between Police and Communities Act of 2019

Category: Police Training

Summary: This bill would require de-escalation training in our police academies, with the overarching focus on preserving life. Under this legislation, officers would be required to undergo effective training on methods such as non-lethal alternatives to deadly force and tactics that use the lowest level of force possible to safely respond to a perceived threat. This bill would also tie DOJ funding to compliance with these trainings.

H.R. 2927 - Justice in Policing Act

Category: Comprehensive

Summary: This bill would hold police accountable in the courts, improve transparency in policing through data collection, improve police training, and make lynching a federal crime.