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END POLICE VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

We can live in a world where the police don't kill people by limiting police interventions, improving community interactions, and ensuring accountability.

CLICK THE CATEGORIES BELOW FOR POLICY SOLUTIONS (DOWNLOAD THIS GRAPHIC

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1. **End Broken Windows Policing**
2. **Community Oversight**
3. **Limit Use of Force**
4. **Independently Investigate & Prosecute**
5. **Community Representation**
6. **Body Cams/Film the Police**
7. **Training**
8. **End For-Profit Policing**
9. **Demilitarization**
10. **Fair Police Union Contract**

*This site will be updated continuously in response to the ideas and insights of activists, organizers and concerned citizens nationwide. Click here to propose a new policy solution to add to the site.

1. END BROKEN WINDOW POLICING

A decades-long focus on policing minor crimes and activities - a practice called Broken Windows policing - has led to the criminalization and over-policing of communities of color and excessive force in otherwise harmless situations. Police killed at least 287 people last year who were involved in minor offenses and harmless activities like sleeping in parks, possessing drugs, looking "suspicious" or having a mental health crisis. These activities are often symptoms of underlying issues of drug addiction, homelessness, and mental illness which should be treated by healthcare professionals and social workers rather than the police.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

decriminalize.png

End Policing of Minor "Broken Windows" Offenses.

The following activities do not threaten public safety and are often used to police black bodies.

1. Decriminalize these activities or de-prioritize their enforcement:

- a) Consumption of Alcohol on Streets
- b) Marijuana Possession
- c) Disorderly Conduct
- d) Trespassing
- e) Loitering

Margarita Sanchez

- f) Disturbing the Peace (including Loud Music)
- g) Spitting
- h) (Example: Respect State Marijuana Laws Act of 2015)
- i) profiling.png
- j) End Profiling and "Stop-and-Frisk"

2. Establish enforceable protections against profiling.

Establish enforceable protections against profiling to prevent police from intervening in civilian lives for no reason other than the "suspicion" of their blackness or other aspects of their identity. This should include:

- a) immigration status, age, housing status, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disability, HIV status, race, religion and national origin as protected groups
- b) the right for people to seek court orders to stop police departments from profiling
- c) bans on both intentional profiling and practices that have a disparate impact on protected groups
- d) ban stops for "furtive" movements such as a reaching for waistband or acting nervous
- e) ban stops for being in a high-crime area
- f) ban stops for matching a generalized description of a suspect (i.e. black male ages 15-25)
- g) require officers to establish objective justification for making a stop and to report every stop including location, race, gender, whether force was used and whether a firearm was found.
- h) (Examples: End Racial Profiling Act of 2015; NYC Community Safety Act; NYC Stop-and-Frisk Reforms)

3. Establish Alternative Approaches to Mental Health Crises

Mental health crises should not be excuses for heavy-handed police interventions and are best handled by mental health professionals. Establish and fund Mental Health Response Teams to respond to crisis situations. These approaches have been proven to reduce police use of force in these situations by nearly 40 percent and should include:

- a) a multidisciplinary co-responder team that includes mental health professionals, social workers and crisis counselors as well as specially trained police officers
- b) involvement of this multidisciplinary team in planning, implementation and response to crises
- c) at least 40 hours of crisis intervention training for police officers (Ex: LAPD Mental Evaluation Team)

2. COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT

Police usually investigate and decide what, if any, consequences their fellow officers should face in cases of police misconduct. Under this system, less than 1 in every 12 complaints of police misconduct nationwide results in some kind of disciplinary action against the officer(s) responsible. Communities need an urgent way to ensure police officers are held accountable for police violence.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

binoculars.jpg

Establish effective civilian oversight structures

Establish an all-civilian oversight structure with discipline power that includes a Police Commission and Civilian Complaints Office with the following powers:

1. The Police Commission should:

- a) determine policy for the police department based on community input and academic expertise
- b) share policy and policy changes in publicly accessible formats
- c) discipline and dismiss police officers
- d) hold public disciplinary hearings
- e) select the candidates for Police Chief, to be hired by the Mayor
- f) evaluate and fire the Police Chief, if needed
- g) receive full-time, competitive salaries for all members
- h) receive regular training on policing and civil rights
- i) not have current, former or family of police officers as members
- j) select its members from candidates offered by community organizations

2. The Civilian Complaints Office should:

- a) receive, investigate and resolve all civilian complaints against police in 120 days
- b) establish multiple in-person and online ways to submit, view and discuss complaints
- c) be immediately notified and required to send an investigator to the scene of a police shooting or in-custody death
- d) be allowed to interrogate officers less than 48 hours after an incident where deadly force is used
- e) access crime scenes, subpoena witnesses and files with penalties for non-compliance
- f) make disciplinary and policy recommendations to the Police Chief
- g) compel the Police Chief to explain why he/she has not followed a recommendation
- h) have the Police Commission decide cases where the Police Chief does not follow recommendations
- i) issue public quarterly reports analyzing complaints, demographics of complainants, status and findings of investigations and actions taken as a result
- j) be housed in a separate location from the police department
- k) be funded at an amount no less than 5% of the total police department budget
- l) have at least 1 investigator for every 70 police officers or 4 investigators at all times, whichever is greater
- m) have its Director selected from candidates offered by community organizations
- n) not have current, former or family of police officers on staff, including the Director
- o) (Ex: San Francisco Charter Policies on Police Commission and Office of Citizen Complaints)

3. Remove barriers to reporting police misconduct

- a) For all stops by a police officer, require officers to give civilians their name, badge number, reason for the stop and a card with instructions for filing a complaint to the civilian oversight structure.

3. LIMIT USE OF FORCE

Police should have the skills and cultural competence to protect and serve our communities without killing people - just as police do in England, Germany, Japan and other developed countries. Last year alone, police killed at least 268 unarmed people and 91 people who were stopped for mere traffic violations. The following policy solutions can restrict the police from using excessive force in everyday interactions with civilians.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

deadlyforce.png

1. Establish standards and reporting of police use of deadly force

- a) Authorize deadly force only when there is an imminent threat to an officer's life or the life of another person and such force is strictly unavoidable to protect life. (Ex: International Deadly Force Standard)
- b) require reporting of police killings or serious injuries of civilians (Ex: The PRIDE Act; Colorado law)

useofforce.png

2. Revise and strengthen local police department use of force policies

Revised police use of force policies should protect human life and rights. Policies should include guidance on reporting, investigation, discipline, and accountability and increase transparency by making the policies available online. This use of force policy should require officers to:

- a) use minimum force to apprehend a suspect, with specific guidelines for the types of force and tools authorized for a given level of resistance (Ex: Seattle PD Policy)
- b) de-escalate first (Ex: Seattle PD Policy)
- c) carry a less-lethal weapon (Ex: Seattle PD Policy)
- d) ban using force on a person for talking back or as punishment for running away (Ex: Cleveland PD Policy)
- e) ban chokeholds, hog-ties and transporting people face down in a vehicle (Ex: NYPD Policy)
- f) stop other officers who are using excessive force (Ex: Las Vegas Metro PD Policy)

chase.jpg

3. End traffic-related police killings and dangerous high-speed police chases

Prohibit police officers from:

- a) shooting at moving vehicles (Ex: Denver PD Policy)
- b) moving in front of moving vehicles (Ex: Denver PD Policy)
- c) high-speed chases of people who have not and are not about to commit a violent felony (Ex: Milwaukee PD Policy)

4. Monitor how police use force and proactively hold officers accountable for excessive force

- a) Report all uses of force to a database with information on related injuries and demographics of the victims. (Ex: Seattle PD Policy)
- b) Establish an early intervention system to correct officers who use excessive force. These systems have been shown to reduce the average number of complaints against officers in a police department by more than 50%. This system should:
 - (1) report officers who receive two or more complaints in the past month
 - (2) report officers who have two or more use of force incidents or complaints in the past quarter
 - (3) require officers to attend re-training and be monitored by an immediate supervisor after their first quarterly report and terminate an officer following multiple reports
- c) Require police departments to notify the state when an officer is found to have willfully violated department policy or the law, committed official misconduct, or resigned while under investigation for these offenses. Maintain this information in a database accessible to the public

(Ex: Illinois Law) and prohibit these officers from serving as police officers, teachers or other governmental employees.

4. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS AND PROSECUTIONS

Local prosecutors rely on local police departments to gather the evidence and testimony they need to successfully prosecute criminals. This makes it hard for them to investigate and prosecute the same police officers in cases of police violence. These cases should not rely on the police to investigate themselves and should not be prosecuted by someone who has an incentive to protect the police officers involved.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

- 1. Lower the standard of proof for Department of Justice civil rights investigations of police officers**
 - a) Allow federal prosecutors to successfully prosecute police officers for misconduct by passing legislation to eliminate the requirement that an officer must "willfully" deprive another's rights in order to violate Section 242.
 - b) Investigations

- 2. Use federal funds to encourage independent investigations and prosecutions**
 - a) Pass legislation such as the Police Training and Independent Review Act of 2015 or use of existing federal funds to encourage external, independent investigations and prosecution of police killings (see Action Items 2.2.2 and 2.2.3 of the President's Task Force Report).

- 3. Establish a permanent Special Prosecutor's Office at the State level for cases of police violence**

The Special Prosecutor's Office should be:

 - a) required and authorized to prosecute all cases of where police kill or seriously injure a civilian, in-custody deaths and cases where a civilian alleges criminal misconduct against a police officer
 - b) equipped with an office and resources to conduct thorough investigations
 - c) required to have its Chief Prosecutor chosen from a list of candidates offered by community organizations

- 4. Require independent investigations of all cases where police kill or seriously injure civilians**

The independent investigators should be:

 - a) required and authorized to prosecute all cases of where police kill or seriously injure a civilian, in-custody deaths and cases where a civilian alleges criminal misconduct against a police officer
 - b) required to investigate all cases where police kill chosen at random from a list of the largest ten agencies in the state
 - c) required to report their findings to the public

5. COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION

While white men represent less than one third of the U.S. population, they comprise about two thirds of U.S. police officers. The police should reflect and be responsive to the cultural, racial and gender diversity of the communities they are supposed to serve.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

community.png

1. Increase the number of police officers who reflect the communities they serve

- a) Require police departments to develop and publicly report a strategy and timeline for achieving a representative proportion of police officers who are women and people of color through outreach, recruitment and changes to departmental practices (Ex: Connecticut Law)

feedback.jpg

2. Use community feedback to inform police department policies and practices

Require a regular survey (Ex: Milwaukee survey) to be fielded to the community to gauge their experiences and perceptions of the police and use this information to inform:

- a) police department policies and practices
- b) police officer evaluations
- c) police officer pay incentives

6. BODY CAMS/ FILM THE POLICE

While they are not a cure-all, body cameras and cell phone video have illuminated cases of police violence and have shown to be important tools for holding officers accountable. Every case where a police officer has been charged with a crime for killing a civilian this year has relied on video evidence showing the officer's actions.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

video.png

1. Body cameras

Require the use of body cameras - in addition to dashboard cameras - and establish policies governing their use to:

- a) record interactions with subjects who have not requested to be kept anonymous
- b) notify subjects that they have the option to remain anonymous and stop recording/storing footage if they choose this option
- c) allow civilians to review footage of themselves or their relatives and request this be released to the public and stored for at least two years
- d) permanently delete footage after 6 months if this footage hasn't been specifically requested to be stored
- e) consider whether cameras or mandated footage are tampered with or unavailable as an evidentiary factor in administrative and criminal proceedings

- f) prevent officers from reviewing footage of an incident before completing initial reports, statements or interviews about an incident
- g) updating privacy laws to protect civilians from having video or audio recordings released publicly that do not contain potential evidence in a use-of-force incident, discharge of a weapon or death.
- h) (Ex: ACLU Model Policy)

7. TRAINING

The current training regime for police officers fails to effectively teach them how to interact with our communities in a way that protects and preserves life. For example, police recruits spend 58 hours learning how to shoot firearms and only 8 hours learning how to de-escalate situations. An intensive training regime is needed to help police officers learn the behaviors and skills to interact appropriately with communities.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

video.png

1. Invest in Rigorous and Sustained Training

Require officers to undergo training - including scenario-based training - on the following topics on at least a quarterly basis and involve the community - including youth of color - in their design and implementation:

- a) Implicit bias
- b) Procedural justice
- c) Relationship-based policing
- d) Community interaction
- e) Crisis intervention, mediation, conflict resolution, and rumor control
- f) Appropriate engagement with youth
- g) Appropriate engagement with LGBTQ, transgender and gender nonconforming individuals
- h) Appropriate engagement with individuals who are english language learners
- i) Appropriate engagement with individuals from different religious affiliations
- j) Appropriate engagement with individuals who are differently abled
- k) De-escalation and minimizing the use of force

2. Intentionally consider 'unconscious' or 'implicit' racial bias

Require current and prospective police officers to undergo mandatory implicit racial bias testing, including testing for bias in shoot/don't shoot decision-making, and develop a clear policy for considering an officer's level of racial bias in:

- a) law enforcement certification
- b) the hiring process
- c) performance evaluations
- d) decisions about whether an officer should be deployed to communities of color

8. END FOR-PROFIT POLICING

Police should be working to keep people safe, not contributing to a system that profits from stopping, searching, ticketing, arresting and incarcerating people.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

interview.jpg

1. End police department quotas for tickets and arrests

- a) Ban police departments from using ticket or arrest quotas to evaluate the performance of police officers
- b) (Ex: Illinois law)

2. Limit fines and fees for low-income people

Pass policies requiring local governments to:

- a) ban issuing fines or arrest warrants for civilians who fail to appear in court for a traffic citation (Ex: Ferguson Policy)
- b) ban generating more than 10% of total municipal revenue from fines and fees (Ex: Missouri law)
- c) allow judges discretion to waive fines and fees for low-income people or initiate payment plans (Ex: Pennsylvania law)
- d) prohibit courts from ordering individuals on parole or probation to pay supervision fees and other correctional fees

3. Prevent police from taking the money or property of innocent people

Prohibit police from:

- a) seizing property of civilians (i.e. civil forfeiture) unless they are convicted of a crime and the state establishes by clear and convincing evidence that the property is subject to forfeiture
- b) keeping any property that has legally been forfeited (instead, this property should go to a general fund)
- c) (Ex: New Mexico law)

9. DEMILITARIZATION

The events in Ferguson have introduced the nation to the ways that local police departments can misuse military weaponry to intimidate and repress communities. Last year alone, militarized SWAT teams killed at least 38 people. The following policies limit police departments from obtaining or using these weapons on our streets.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

1. End the Federal Government's 1033 Program Providing Military Weaponry to Local Police Departments

- a) End the supply of federal military weaponry to local police departments under the 1033 program. (Ex: Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act)

2. Establish Local Restrictions to Prevent Police Departments from Purchasing or Using Military Weaponry

Restrict police departments from:

- a) using federal grant money to purchase military equipment (Ex: Montana law)
- b) deploying armored vehicles, weaponized aircraft, Stingray surveillance equipment, camouflage uniforms, and grenade launchers
- c) using SWAT teams unless there is an emergency situation or imminent threat to life and high-ranking officers have given approval (Ex: Cincinnati PD Policy)
- d) conducting no-knock raids without probable cause to believe someone inside the home is an imminent threat (Ex: Cincinnati PD Policy)
- e) accessing federal grant money or purchasing military equipment if the department has been recently found to demonstrate a "pattern or practice" of discriminatory policing

10. FAIR POLICE CONTRACTS

Police unions have used their influence to establish unfair protections for police officers in their contracts with local, state and federal government and in statewide Law Enforcement Officers' Bills of Rights. These provisions create one set of rules for police and another for civilians, and make it difficult for Police Chiefs or civilian oversight structures to punish police officers who are unfit to serve.

POLICY SOLUTIONS

interview.jpg

1. Remove barriers to effective misconduct investigations and civilian oversight

Remove contract provisions, local policies, and provisions in state Law Enforcement Officers' Bills of Rights laws that:

- a) allow officers to wait 48 hours or more before being interrogated after an incident
- b) prevent investigators from pursuing other cases of misconduct revealed during an investigation
- c) prevent an officer's name or picture from being released to the public
- d) prohibit civilians from having the power to discipline, subpoena or interrogate police officers
- e) state that the Police Chief has the sole authority to discipline police officers
- f) enable officers to appeal a disciplinary decision to a hearing board of other police officers
- g) prevent an officer from being investigated for an incident that happened 100 or more days prior
- h) allow an officer to choose not to take a lie detector test without being punished, require the civilian who is accusing that officer of misconduct to pass a lie detector first, or prevent the officer's test results from being considered as evidence of misconduct

2. Keep officers' disciplinary history accessible to police departments and the public

Remove contract provisions, local policies, and provisions in state Law Enforcement Officers' Bills of Rights laws that allow police officers to:

- a) expunge or destroy records of past misconduct (both sustained and unsustained) from their disciplinary file
- b) prevent their disciplinary records from being released to the public via a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request

3. Ensure officers do not get paid after they kill or seriously injure a civilian

Remove contract provisions, local policies, and provisions in state Law Enforcement Officers' Bills of Rights laws that allow police officers to:

- a) receive paid leave or remain on desk-duty during an investigation following a police shooting or other use of deadly force
- b) receive paid leave or remain on desk-duty after being charged with a felony offense

