

19th House District

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and area townships



134th General Assembly Committees

Energy and Natural Resources
Health
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Representative Mary Lightbody 19th House District

Testimony to the House State and Local Government Committee
House Concurrent Resolution 20
December 7, 2022
Mary Lightbody, Ph.D.

Chairman Wiggam, Vice Chair John, Ranking Member Kelly, and members of the House State and Local Government Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in support of House Concurrent Resolution 20. This resolution would urge the United States Congress to enact H.R. 1280, George Floyd Justice in Policing Act.¹

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was cruelly and unjustly murdered by policemen, due to an alleged use of a counterfeit \$20 bill. This is just one incident of police malfeasance that we have seen throughout the United States. Here in Ohio, we know the names and stories of Tamir Rice, Jayland Walker, Donovan Lewis, Timothy Russell and Malissa Williams, and too many other lives that have been taken.

While police violence has continued to rise, it's important to note that the FBI didn't even gather data on the use of force by police officers until 2019, despite reporting statistics on civilian crimes in great detail.²

It is necessary and urgent that Congress pass this legislation in order to make progress towards addressing the issue of police violence in this country, especially towards Black Americans. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act has passed through the House, but has not moved through the Senate since March 2021.

If passed in Congress, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act would create a national police misconduct registry that would compile data on complaints and records of police misconduct. The bill would also enhance enforcement mechanisms for violations by law enforcement by lowering the criminal intent standard, limiting qualified immunity, and granting subpoena powers to the Department of Justice for some investigations.

Another component of this act is establishing a framework to prevent racial profiling at the federal, state, and local levels. There is an extreme discrepancy between the rate at which police kill white people and the rate at which they kill Black people, Native Americans, and Hispanic people. Black Americans make up around 13% of the U.S.

¹ <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1280>

² <https://www.security.org/resources/police-brutality-statistics/>

population, but account for more than 1 in 4 people killed by police. In Ohio, there are more racial disparities in deadly force than 49% of states. ³

If the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act is passed, the Department of Justice would be directed to create uniform accreditation standards for law enforcement agencies, and would require law enforcement officers to complete training on not just racial profiling, but implicit bias and the importance of intervention when another officer uses excessive and unnecessary force. In addition, the legislation would restrict the use of no-knock warrants, chokeholds, and carotid holds, all of which are practices which have resulted in high-profile in-custody deaths.⁴

It is essential that the Ohio House of Representatives demonstrates our support for Congress to pass this act so we can take necessary steps towards reforming our current system.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important piece of legislation. Along with Representative Brent, I would be happy to answer any questions the committee members may have.

³ <https://policescorecard.org/oh>

⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/15/us/police-accountability-george-floyd>