

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE



The Criminal Justice Solutions Organization
"COMMITTED TO JUSTICE FOR ALL"

Blueprint for Police Reform



Recommendations/Positions

Prepared and Submitted by:
Police Reform Taskforce Committee
National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice
(NABCJ)

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Guardian First: Building a Trusted, Community-Centered Police Department

One core recommendation of President Obama's 21st Century Policing Report was that agencies abandon the "warrior model" of policing. Instead, departments must embrace the "guardian model," where officers are guided by empathy and present themselves as public servants devoted to understanding, protecting, and working with community members.

Ending Qualified Immunity for Police Officers

Ending qualified immunity provides civil rights protection for our citizens against unreasonable search and seizures, excessive force and prevents the police from using qualified immunity as a defense.

Embrace Harm Reduction Policing

The harm reduction approach requires officers to be fair and impartial in exercising their enforcement authority. Police agencies have a long history of discriminating against and traumatizing people of color, particularly Black men and boys, and increasingly Black women and girls and LGBTQIA individuals.

Remove Police from Schools

We know that police presence in schools does not decrease student victimization and may reduce feelings of safety for many. Youth of color often do not feel comfortable, valued, or safe in educational spaces where they interact with representatives of a system that generally views Blacks and Latinx as threats. This includes utilizing a holistic public health approach to school safety and crisis intervention that is relational, racially just, restorative, trauma-responsive, and trauma-informed. For example the increase in resources related to social and mental health services for students.

Make Community Competent Behavioral Healthcare Professionals the Default First Responders to 911 Crisis Intervention Calls

Law enforcement should be one option in an array of emergency responders, not necessarily the first option. Individuals in crisis need specialized intervention and sometimes skillful de-escalation, not forced compliance or arrest.

Publicly Disclose Police Officer Disciplinary Records

Police officers are public employees. However, unlike other public servants, firefighters, doctors, nurses, social workers, accountants, and correction officers, police corrective or punitive action must not receive cover from public scrutiny. Often, the State of New York courts has ruled in favor of the city against the police union attempts to keep this information from public view.

Establish a National Police Misconduct Registry

This provision must include all types of misconduct by police officers in addition to the use of force and racial profiling. The Registry must require the reporting of all federal, state, and local peace officers. The Registry must also include public disclosure.

A Federal Mandate to Ban Chokeholds

This provision calls for the Federal Government (Congress) to ban the use of chokeholds by law enforcement legislatively. The ban occurs without incentivizing police departments that comply and includes strangleholds, neck restraints, neck holds, and carotid artery restraints.

Police Unions are an Obstacle to Reform/Restructuring

Prohibit police unions involved in labor negotiations from engagement in the discipline process. This provision removes discipline from the collective bargaining process. Collective bargaining agreements must not shield employees from accountability, particularly those who have as much power as police officers.

Police Departments Must Build a Culture of Transparency, Accountability, and Guardianship to Improve Public Safety in Our Communities and Reduce Harm Caused by Police. Collect, Review, Analyze and Disclose Data to Identify Categories of Community Issues Concerning Public Safety.

Police departments must adequately collect, analyze, and share accurate and timely data with the public. They must use data to evaluate what works and what does not work and the impact on the community. Transparency of the data process is equally important. Data collection along lines prescribed by the National Incident-Based Reporting System is a step in an improved direction. We must also understand how the police are presently attempting to meet the needs of the communities they serve. What role does law enforcement play in addressing significant public safety and social issues?

Community Reinvestment

Community public safety requires more inputs beyond the police. We must invest in community-based services and crisis responders to enable a more safe, fair, and just community. Investment in housing for the unsheltered, care for the mentally ill, and the drug-addled address' major root causes of social dysfunction. This investment could mitigate the latter problems in our community and increase public safety.

Duty to Intervene

The culture in many police departments discourages some officers from speaking up when they see colleagues involved in inappropriate or unlawful behavior, even when they have a policy and legal obligation to do so. We encourage police departments to develop and implement policies that support officers that intervene upon witnessing excessive force committed by their peers and supervisors. Also, hold accountable those who engage in such misconduct.

Pattern or Practice Investigations Use by the Department of Justice

The Department of Justice should revive and dramatically expand the use of Pattern or Practice investigations. These investigations often resulted in the creation of consent decrees or negotiated settlements. This process will include community oversight and engagement opportunities, such as community outreach plans and inclusion of community voices in the review of new policies. Private sector-type service satisfaction surveys must become a regular aspect of policing.

Law Enforcement Officer Decertification

Decertification standards and processes intended to remove police officers whose misconduct is unlawful, harmful, or inappropriate from the law enforcement profession. But state variation in standards and practices dilutes the impact of such measures. NABCJ believes that National Standards for decertification and a shared national database for decertified officers will help prevent unfit officers from continuing their employment.

Prohibit all Consent Searches

The individual whose person or property is probed by police theoretically consents and therefore permits warrantless searches. Law enforcement officers ask for permission to explore because it is the quickest and easiest way to search a person or property suspected of possessing or containing evidence of a crime when they obtain consent.

Suspend and Transfer the Enforcement of Traffic Violations from Local Police Departments to a Civilian Agency. (Traffic & Parking Enforcement)

We encourage local governments to suspend and transfer authority from local police departments to civilian traffic enforcement agencies to enforce traffic and vehicle regulations whose violation does not threaten public safety. There are examples of these already in several cities across our country.