

July 15, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Re: The Senate Must Swiftly Pass the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

I write on behalf of UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza), the nation's largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization, to urge the Senate to act swiftly on meaningful police reform and take up, improve, and pass the "George Floyd Justice in Policing Act" (H.R. 7120). This legislation is a crucial step in reimagining public safety and puts communities first.

Recently we have witnessed, once again, the deadly consequences of the structural racism endemic to our nation's law enforcement institutions, as evidenced by the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Carlos Ingram-Lopez, and so many others who were unarmed or in police custody and killed. We join the millions of people throughout the nation in demanding government action and accountability in ending policies that racialize outcomes and encourage police violence. Senate delay or inaction is unacceptable and will continue to prove deadly for our Black and Brown communities. In the last month alone, we have seen law enforcement continue to lead with violence as our communities mourn the murders of Rayshard Brooks, Erik Salgado, Sean Monterrosa, and Andres Guardado.

However, police brutality is just one outgrowth of the racism institutionalized within our systems of law and justice. States and cities prioritize growing police budgets over community investments that can improve public safety. Over-policing, intense surveillance, and militarization of law enforcement in Black and Brown communities are the norm. The "George Floyd Justice in Policing Act" includes a number of provisions directly responsive to the police reform priorities of UnidosUS. The bill's language establishes a national standard for use of force, prohibits chokeholds, bars racial profiling, and makes changes to allow prosecutors to more successfully hold law enforcement officers accountable for deprivations of civil rights and civil liberties. It also creates a set of vital data collection and sharing measures that will increase the transparency and accountability of police departments.

While the bill is not perfect, it is imperative that the Senate immediately begin addressing these pressing issues as the House has done with H.R. 7120. As police reform legislation advances toward enactment, we urge the Senate to strengthen the bill by fully ending the militarization of law enforcement; eliminating qualified immunity for all local, state, and federal actors; and ending law enforcement in schools.

Now is the time for the Senate to save lives, honor the Black and Brown lives already lost to senseless police brutality, and acknowledge the millions of people throughout the country who are demanding an antiracist vision of justice that strengthens our communities. This begins with the Senate improving and passing the “George Floyd Justice in Policing Act” to hold law enforcement accountable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Murguía". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janet Murguía
President and CEO
UnidosUS