

Police Reform & Racial Justice: Support the Justice in Policing Act (S. 3912/H.R. 7120)



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Police officers take an oath to serve and protect, but the murders of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rashard Brooks and the near-fatal shooting of Jacob Blake call attention to discriminatory—even criminal—conduct toward Black and brown communities. We must confront systemic, deeply rooted institutional racism in law enforcement and pass laws to end police brutality and discriminatory policing.

WE ARE EQUAL UNDER THE LAW

- ▶ The 14th amendment states that no person shall be deprived of “life, liberty, or property without due process of law,” and no person shall be denied “equal protection of the laws.” Yet, police officers repeatedly and systemically deprive citizens of these rights in Black and brown communities through unequal enforcement of laws, harassment, excessive use of force, brutality, and even murder.
- ▶ According to a study published in 2019 by the National Academy of Sciences, Black men are 2.5 times more likely to be killed by police than white men over the course of their lives, and Black women are more than 1.4 times more likely to be killed by police than white women.
- ▶ Citizens rely on police officers to protect us, and we appreciate and respect officers for their sacrifices. But police, too, must respect the communities they serve by regarding members of every community as equals, regardless of race or religious affiliation, and treating all of us first as citizens, not suspects.

IMPACT ON OUR STUDENTS

- ▶ NEA members believe all students should have the opportunity for an education that prepares them for life, but this opportunity depends on our ability—and willingness—to take steps that protect their lives.
- ▶ Our Black and brown students are taught from early on to tread carefully to avoid undue attention from law enforcement. However, caution offers no guarantee that they will be safe.
- ▶ Students are protesting across the nation to force reforms because they know that returning home from a job, visiting friends, or going to a cookout, concert, or playground should not put their lives—or the lives of their loved ones—at risk.

JUSTICE IN POLICING ACT (S. 3912/H.R. 7120)

- ▶ NEA members were gratified that the House of Representatives passed the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act (H.R. 7120); now, the Senate must act.
- ▶ S. 3912 would take several steps to address systemic racism and help end police brutality, including:
 - Prohibiting law enforcement agencies from profiling based on race, religion, or other characteristics, and mandating training on discriminatory profiling for all law enforcement
 - Banning maneuvers like chokeholds that apply pressure that slows or stops blood flow to the brain
 - Mandating dashboard and body cameras for federal law enforcement and requiring state and local law enforcement to use federal funds to purchase body cameras
- ▶ We must enact meaningful reforms to protect the civil rights and liberties of every person and restore the faith that all communities should have in law enforcement agencies.