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August 26, 2020

Senator Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus, the millions of Americans we represent, and the countless more who demand justice and peace, **I write today to implore you to bring the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act to the floor of the Senate for a vote.**

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was viciously murdered by police offices with complete impunity, on camera, for 8 minutes and 46 seconds. His death sparked a global movement for racial equality and forced this nation to a moral reckoning over our long sordid history with racism, oppression, and domestic terrorism through white supremacy. There is no silver bullet for the many problems we face, but one thing is clear: we need police reform now.

This moment demands policing reform, as we each have an opportunity to stand on the right side of history as a legislative body. The movement demands policing reform, as tens of thousands across the country and countless more around the world have taken to the streets to demand an end to the violence that has plagued this profession since its inception. And the families of victims demand policing reform, as they struggle to find closure and make sense of their needless tragedy.

Now we are all collectively traumatized by yet another video depicting the brutal shooting of yet another unarmed Black man. This time it was Jacob Blake, shot in the back seven times, in broad daylight, in front of his children. His crime: separating a fight. Mr. Blake is reportedly paralyzed from his encounter with the Kenosha Police Department. He deserves justice for his pain and suffering. His children deserve justice for the trauma they have endured. And the Kenosha community deserves a justice system that protects and serves them.

Yesterday marked the 2-month anniversary of the House of Representative's historic passage of the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, bold, yet balanced legislation to professionalize policing through training, standards, and accountability. Having served in the Senate for as long as you have, you know all too well that Congress can take 30 years to act on an issue or not at all. But we are all witnessing a rainbow movement of young people and old people, Black and White, from the South and all along the East Coast, to the West Coast and Middle America, and they are all calling for elected officials at all levels of government to take action and pass policing reform legislation. The House of Representatives acted within 30 days to the day of the murder of George Floyd to pass a bipartisan police reform bill. But for two months, that bill has languished in your Chamber because you refuse to act.

How many more mothers and fathers must mourn the loss of a child to police violence? How many more children must be raised without a parent lost to police violence? How many more videos must we watch before you will act? Enough is enough. We have an opportunity to work together to reimagine public safety in the 21st century, to not only rid systemic racism, but to redefine how we address the issues that police have struggled to manage, such as domestic violence, substance abuse, and mental health.

Police reform is not just about holding police officers accountable for their actions. That is a noble principle for any profession, but the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act does more than ensure that police officers are held personally liable for violating the civil rights of an individual or ensuring that State Attorneys General have they resources they need to conduct independent investigations. This legislation also ensures that police have the training they need to be successful in their communities and promote national standards within the profession. I am most excited by grants to community-based organizations to work with law enforcement and elected officials at the local level to redesign public safety for the unique challenges and needs within the community.

The Congressional Black Caucus has long fought for policing reform as part of our broader criminal justice reform efforts. Indeed, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act includes policies championed by our founding members. That is why we were able to lead the passage of this critical legislation in the House: it was decades in the making and remains a permanent interest of our Caucus. **It is from that historical perspective that we call on you to stand with us on the right side of history and advance meaningful policing reform through the Senate.**

Sincerely,



Karen Bass
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus