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Massachusetts Elected Officials of Color Call for Reform, Justice in the Wake of Anti-Police Brutality Protests

BOSTON, June 2, 2020 -- Today, elected officials of color from every level of Massachusetts government -- federal, state, county, and municipal -- gathered for a press conference on the Massachusetts State House steps to voice their support for those protesting against police brutality and racist violence against Black Americans and systemic racism more broadly.

"We are heartbroken and outraged by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and all those who have been killed by police. Ensuring real accountability for law enforcement will require connecting grassroots organizing and mobilizing with legislating that ends the militarization of police forces, creates accountability for racial profiling, strengthens oversight and independent investigations, and ends qualified immunity, among other changes," said **Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley (MA-07)**. "I am resolved to join with my colleagues at the state and local level to call for meaningful policy changes that will save lives in our communities."

In response to the recent killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and others, and the growing protests across the country, the group laid out a 10-point plan with demands for police accountability and policies to advance racial justice at multiple levels of government. **Please see the 10-point plan attached.**

"Our fight involves more than just putting an end to police brutality and state-sanctioned violence against unarmed Black people," said **Boston City Council President Kim Janey**. "If these were to end today, we would still be working day in and day out to undo the inequities that force us to live in substandard housing, with low-paying jobs, and send our children to under-resourced schools."

"I'm grateful for the outpouring of grief and righteous anger, and the unwavering demand for justice, from so many protesters," said **Senator Sonia Chang-Díaz (D-Boston)**. "I'm also grateful to the legislative colleagues who've reached out in recent days, asking what they can do to help. Today, we're offering up a roadmap for that support. If you've tweeted #blacklivesmatter or offered up thoughts and prayers, today we ask you to stand with us and actively fight for these proposals to protect men and women of color--many of which we've tried to move for years. Let's not wait any longer to get them to floor votes."

"Racism is violent by definition. It affects every single determinant of health and is the leading driver of inequity," said **Boston City Councilor Ricardo Arroyo**. "Systemic racism is a

tangible thing not an abstract concept, and unless well intentioned colleagues join us in dismantling the racism entangled in the systems of which we are a part, they are part of the problem. True solidarity requires them to leverage their power with us to enact real policy change.”

“It shouldn’t take a video of a black man being murdered by police for white allies to believe us and stand with us when we say that our institutions from political parties to the legislature to our schools, banks, and housing are deeply plagued with institutionalized racism,” said **Rep. Nika Elugardo (D-Boston)**. “The level of defensiveness and focus on “the other guy” as the true racist is destructive and comes to this— to George Floyd. It is time for Black and Brown people to speak up and for allies everywhere to listen. Stop defending your racist policies and reactions and start fighting alongside us for the structural changes we are telling you are required to dismantle racism in Massachusetts. Start with policing reform, but don’t stop there. Housing, healthcare, education, small business development and more require the reforms Black and Brown people have been demanding for decades. Stop putting off the work and help us get justice done.”

“It is past time to take bold steps to have greater accountability, transparency, and racial justice in our policing,” said **Councilor Andrea Campbell**. “I am proud to stand with other electeds of color to put forward achievable plans, including strengthening our Community Ombudsman Oversight Panel, amending Civil Service to increase diversity in our public safety agencies, revising use of force policies, and tracking demographic data on police stops, arrests and use of force.”

"Posting #BlackLivesMatter is a symbolic way to show support, but as elected officials we have a greater responsibility than posting hashtags and symbolism," said **Councilor Lydia Edwards**. “The votes we take and the policy we support show what our values are and have a real impact on the lives of our constituents. I encourage all of my colleagues to support the following legislation and show that they truly believe that Black lives matter."

“As the chair of the Civil Rights Committee on the Boston City Council and one of the sponsors of our resolution in support of federal action condemning police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force — I am so proud to be working with my fellow Massachusetts electeds of color, at multiple levels of government, to produce policy with a community-centered and action-oriented approach,” said **Councilor Julia Meija**. “We have carried centuries of generational trauma from systemic racism and enough is enough. It’s past time we address these issues at its core and create intentional and impactful legislation to ensure all means all.”

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Ten-Point Plan to Address Police Violence and Advance Racial Justice

Federal

1. Pass Congresswoman Pressley's [Resolution](#) to condemn police brutality, racial profiling and the excessive use of force.
2. Improve oversight and independent investigations to hold individual law enforcement officers and police departments accountable.
3. Department of Justice must reassert its statutory authority to investigate individual instances of racial profiling, police brutality and violence and investigate and litigate individual law enforcement officers and police departments routinely violating civil rights.
4. Adopt sound and unbiased law enforcement policies at all levels of government that reduce the disparate impact of police brutality, racial profiling and use of force on Black and Brown people and other historically marginalized communities.

State

5. **Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST):** Resolve to provide for a "[Special Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training](#)" to study and make recommendations concerning the implementation of a Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) system, **H2146 Reps Holmes and Vieira**; Reported favorably now with Rules Committee; Establishes a statewide POST system to certify police officers and enable de-certification for misconduct and abuse.
6. **Civil Service Exam Review and Oversight:** [An Act to Reform Civil Service Exams](#), **H2292 Rep Holmes**; Currently sent to study, but could be added to Outside Section of the Budget; Establishes an Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity to establish guidelines and review for diversity plans for all state agencies, Establishes a peace officer exam advisory board to review examinations for appointment and promotion of peace officers.
7. **Commission on Structural Racism:** [An Act establishing a special commission on structural racism](#), H1440, Holmes; Currently sent to study, but could be added to Outside Section of the Budget; Establishes a commission to study how the systemic presence of institutional racism has created a culture of structural racial inequality which has exacerbated disproportionate minority contact with the criminal justice system in Massachusetts.
8. Adopt clear statutory limits on **police use of force**, including choke-holds and other tactics known to have deadly consequences. Require independent investigation of officer-related deaths.

Require data collection and reporting on race, regarding all arrests and police use of force by every department. In drafting; to be filed by Rep. Liz Miranda soon.

Municipal

9. [Declaring Racism is a Public Health Crisis](#) and worthy of treatment, assessment and financial investment in order to eradicate negative health impacts.

10. Create a Civil Review Board/Commission with subpoena power to investigate allegations of law enforcement wrongdoing.

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

BOSTON



Join

***Violence In Boston Inc. &
Black Lives Matter Boston for a Rally
and Vigil for George Floyd, Breonna
Taylor & Ahmad Arbery as well as our
Fallen Locally***

**Tuesday, June 2, 2020 @ 5:00PM
Franklin Park near the Lemmanuel**

Shattick Entrance

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