



Cincinnati Federation of Teachers Resolution in Support of Justice Reform While Condemning Police Brutality

(Approved June 4, 2020)

WHEREAS, every life lost to police violence is a tragic loss to our country and our world; and

WHEREAS, police in the United States, through acts of brutality and the use of excessive force, kill far more people than police in other comparable nations and have been historically shielded from accountability; and

WHEREAS, every person in this country has a right to live, a right to breathe, and a right to be a part of their community without fear of violence and senseless attack simply for the color of their skin; and

WHEREAS, the CFT condemns the government's actions and lack thereof and stands with activists demanding an end to the systemic racism that has abused, incarcerated, and killed thousands of Black and Brown people; and

WHEREAS, police brutality against men, women, and children of color is among the most serious ongoing human rights and civil liberties violations in the United States and has led to community destabilization, a decrease in public safety, and the exacerbation of structural inequities; and

WHEREAS, the system of policing in America, and its systemic targeting of and use of deadly and brutal force against Black people, stems from the long legacy of slavery, lynching, and Jim Crow laws in the United States and has been perpetuated by violent and harmful law enforcement practices; and

WHEREAS, there is no national legal standard to determine whether a police officer used excessive force in a given situation; and

WHEREAS, the murders of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Breonna Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky, Sam Dubose at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, and countless others, remind us that we have much work left to do in the fight to dismantle the systemic bias and structural racism to establish equal treatment, and safety on the streets for all, regardless of race; and

WHEREAS, systemic change is needed urgently, including repairing broken relationships between minority communities and law enforcement, making greater efforts to ensure police forces reflect the communities they serve, and ensuring that racial profiling is avoided; and

WHEREAS, unarmed black people were killed at a five times the rate of unarmed whites in 2015; and

WHEREAS, 36% of unarmed people killed by police were black in 2015 despite black people being only 13% of the U.S. population; and

WHEREAS, according to mappingpoliceviolence.org, 8 of the 100 largest city police departments kill black men at higher rates than the US murder rate; and

WHEREAS, new police recruits usually spend about 60 hours learning how to handle a gun, but only eight hours each on how to de-escalate tense situations or properly handle the mentally ill; and

WHEREAS, data shows there is a direct correlation between the increased militarization of a police department and corresponding levels of police brutality; and

WHEREAS, Police Departments that have adopted the following policies kill from 5% to 25% fewer people: requires officer to use all other means before shooting, requires all use of force to be reported, bans chokeholds & strangleholds, has use of force continuum, requires de-escalation, duty to intervene if another officer uses excessive force, restricts shooting at moving vehicles, and requires warning before shooting; and

WHEREAS, laws in 38 states plainly allow citizens to openly film the police in public; however, there are 12 states—California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Washington that do not; and

WHEREAS, there is no national legislation to compulsorily decertify convicted law enforcement officers or create a tracking database to stop a law enforcement officer leaving one police department because of a pattern of misconduct from being hired by another department without those issues being addressed; and

WHEREAS, the House of Representatives finds that the conduct of law enforcement officers who engage in racial profiling and excessive force, which can include shootings, brutal beatings, fatal chokings, and any other excessive treatment, is a violation of the Bill of Rights of the United States; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, the CFT is reaffirming our commitment to the fight forward to defend and uphold the rights of all Americans, including women, people of color, the disabled, all ethnic minorities, immigrants and members of the LGBTQIA community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT condemns all acts of police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force throughout the country; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the starting point of our work in the area of racial equity must be a reflection and internal examination, whereby the CFT will look for ways to engage our members in open and courageous conversations on racism, inequity and privilege; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT supports movements that expose injustice and mistreatment by employing civil disobedience in the tradition of great civil, human, and women's rights work, along with the work of the NAACP, the Black Lives Matter movement, and similar initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT will collaborate with unions representing police and public safety officers in the law enforcement community to advocate for fair policing through greater transparency and accountability, which will lead to safer communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT supports law enforcement officers receiving thorough and professional training on procedural bias and fairness, implicit bias, institutional bias, relationship-based and community interaction, de-escalation, minimizing use of force, and cultural competency; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT encourages Police Departments to adopt the following policies in efforts of minimizing fatal outcomes: requires officers to use all other means before shooting, requires all use of force to be reported, bans chokeholds & strangleholds, has use of force continuum, requires de-escalation, duty to intervene if another officer uses excessive force, restricts shooting at moving vehicles, requires warning before shooting; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, body cameras should be equitably funded by states or localities, not as part of local police budgets; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, there should be clear rules for when body cameras must be activated and for recordings to be accessible to the public via clear measures in cases of accusations of unnecessary violence in order to increase transparency and trust within the community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, if there's a case where body cameras should have been used, but have not been, there should be a presumption of police misconduct and an investigation should follow; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, there should be nationwide legislation to permit citizens to openly film police as long as it does not impede or tamper with their ability to perform their lawful duties; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT supports Police Departments in creating a publicly transparent and searchable national database tracking law enforcement officers conduct of every stop, frisk, summons, use of force, arrest, and killing and shall also include all relevant info for each interaction — race, gender, time, place, reason and any other consideration that could help detect bias; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT calls on the Department of Justice to demand the adoption and enforcement with integrity of sound and unbiased law enforcement policies at all levels of government that reduce the disparate impact of police brutality and use of force on Black and Brown people and other historically marginalized communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT calls on the Department of Justice to reinstitute its role in investigating individual instances of police brutality, violence, and racial profiling, and police departments that violate civil rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT calls on the Department of Justice to take on a role in filing briefs urging courts to reconsider decisions that permit unreasonable and excessive police practices and establish meaningful oversight of consent decrees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the CFT supports the House of Representatives strengthening efforts to eliminate instances of excessive use of force, and conducting stringent oversight and independent investigations into instances of police brutality, racial profiling, and excessive use of force, and hold individual law enforcement officers and police departments accountable; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the CFT supports its members in calling their local and state officials and encouraging them to support the actions above condemning all acts of police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force throughout the country.