



## **RACISM AND POLICE VIOLENCE** **2020 Overview**

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### **LWVUS URGENT RESOLUTION**

#### **RACIAL JUSTICE FOR BLACK PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR**

Whereas, the deaths of George Floyd and countless other Black people have focused our nation’s attention on continuing structural and systemic racism in law enforcement and the justice system; and,

Whereas, Black people and all historically marginalized people of color are disproportionately criminalized and targeted by excessive force and brutality by law enforcement; and,

Whereas, delegates to the 2020 League of Women Voters (League) Convention are outraged by these injustices in law enforcement that unfairly target Black people and all people of color; and,

Whereas, we have a crisis as a result of racism and socio-economic inequalities that have marginalized, discriminated against and harmed Black people and all people of color. Education, housing, employment, healthcare and every aspect of American life have been impacted; and,

Whereas, the League acknowledges painfully that America is a nation founded on racism. We must work to end white privilege and dispel the myth of white supremacy if we are to become the nation we pledge to be; and,

Whereas, the League commemorates the centennial of our organization and passage of the 19th Amendment, we recognize the courage, persistence and vision of our founding members. Yet, our past has been marred by racism and it is time to acknowledge this so that we can continue to work toward being Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive, (DEI); and,

Whereas, the League believes in individual liberties, civil rights, human rights, and voting rights writ large; we defend democracy and oppose all threats to these constitutional rights; therefore,

We Resolve First, That the League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, to prevent excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. We also call for prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism, and the harm that it causes; and,

We Resolve Second, That the League help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident; that Black people and all people of color deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done to Black people and all people of color across the nation so that, regardless of race, racial mixture, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, gender or sexual orientation we may truly become a nation “indivisible, with liberty and justice for all”.

*Adopted June 2020*

### **I. Introduction**

Say their names: *Timothy Thomas. Roger Owensby Jr. QuanDivier Hicks. Sam Dubose. Paul Gaston. Dontez O’Neal. Melvin Murray. Daniel Row. Gregory Sanders. James Carney. James Clay. Jawari Porter. Kelley Brandon Forte. Trepierre Hummons. Everette Howard. Corey McGinnis.* These are some of the African American men who died in

interactions with police in the Cincinnati area since 2006.

Ten African American men were killed in the Cincinnati area in the six years between 2013 and 2019<sup>1</sup>. Their causes of death were gunshots, tasers, car crashes, suffocation. Some were involved in

<sup>1</sup> [mappingpoliceviolence.org](http://mappingpoliceviolence.org)

conflict or crime; some in mental or emotional crisis; some were just going about daily life. All died too soon and left family behind. In some cases, families won wrongful death cases and cash awards from government or university, in other cases the death was ruled justified. In none of these cases were police officers convicted of crimes.

While white and Hispanic Cincinnatians have also died in police interactions, this overwhelming pattern of African American fatalities in our community demonstrates serious racial inequities, mirroring the national situation. African Americans in Cincinnati and nationally are three times more likely to be killed by police than white people.

In Cincinnati, the average rate of killings by police to population over the 2013-19 period 5.8. Cincinnati and Columbus have higher rates of police encounter deaths than Cleveland and Toledo.

## II. Is this new?

One question commonly asked is whether there is more violence by police in the 21st Century and if so, why? The causes of increased police violence are variously attributed to the war on drugs, greater militarization of police, more guns on the streets, greater community incivility, generational poverty and growing inequality, white anger at their loss of majority power.

However, we don't know if there is actually an increase. It is equally possible that these deaths were occurring in similar or worse numbers 50 or 100 years ago, but were not reported or studied. Thanks to more news coverage, social media and cellphone cameras, the general public is more aware of the problem and more likely to see patterns throughout the country.

## III. Black Lives Matter

Over the past 7 years (since 2013), the world has heard the words "Black Lives Matter" as a cry to recognize humanity and a call to action. This may be a new slogan and a #hashtag but the message is not new. In discussing police reform, it helps to understand "Black Lives Matter" and the common threads of similar movements in America's history.

The desire to live in America as truly free citizens enjoying the rights and freedom espoused

**A portion from A Letter from Black Lives Matter Global Network Co-Founder, Executive Director, and Board President**

**Patrisse Cullors**

"When Trayvon Martin was murdered and in 2013 when George Zimmerman was acquitted, my body and spirit was moved into action. I couldn't imagine how in 2013 a white passing person could kill a young boy and not be held accountable. I didn't want George Zimmerman to be the period to the story. I didn't want his name to be the name held up over and over again by the media, by his fellow white supremacists.

That's why when I saw the phrase Black Lives Matter spelled out by Alicia Garza in a love letter towards Black people – I decided to put a hashtag on it. Alicia, Opal, and I created #BlackLivesMatter as an online community to help combat anti-Black racism across the globe. We firmly believed our movement, which would later become an organization, needed to be a contributing voice for Black folks and our allies to support changing the material conditions for Black people.

For more than 500 years Black people have been fighting for our freedom. We have fought back against slavery, Black codes, Jim Crow laws, policing, incarceration, some of the highest unemployment rates, consistent homelessness, dying while giving birth, being murdered for being trans or non-binary. We have been the consistent moral compass in a country that has thrived on harming the most vulnerable of its population."

in the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence has sparked movements among Black people and sympathizers of all races and nationalities.

**NAACP:** The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Its membership crosses racial lines and focuses on every aspect of social justice –education, housing, voting rights, and health equity. It was established in 1909 in response to riots in Springfield, Illinois when a white mob burned down homes, ransacked businesses and murdered two African Americans. Founding members included white progressives along with African Americans W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida Wells-Barnett, Archibald Grimke and Mary Church Terrell. Mr. DuBois was initially involved with another civil rights group, the Niagara Movement,

which was started in 1905. They eventually merged into the NAACP.<sup>2</sup>

**Movements in the Civil Rights Era:** In the 1950s and 1960s, the push for Civil Rights always included the focus on the inequities in law enforcement and criminal justice. While the NAACP was in the forefront, other organizations were also generated from this movement.

- **Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC):** The SCLC was founded by Ralph Abernathy, Martin Luther King, local icon Fred Shuttlesworth and others. As they marched and protested for desegregation, they often met with the brute force of law enforcement. The clash between peaceful protest and law enforcement is still happening today.<sup>3</sup>
- **Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)** This group started at University of Chicago with primarily white students focused on desegregation, then hired James Farmer as its first Black leader. Farmer began work in the hostile South using peaceful protest and countertop protests. CORE organizers faced violently attacks. Eventually the group began to turn more towards Black separatist views.<sup>4</sup>
- **Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)** Formed from young SCLC members who wanted to see change happen faster than the more mainstream SCLC, their protest tactics of sit-ins, Freedom Rides, etc. were met with violence and murder of their members. Some stayed on the peaceful, non-violent track (e.g. John Lewis). Others became more militant in their approach like Stokely Carmichael, who popularized the term “Black Power”.<sup>5</sup>

**Black Power Movements:** The Civil rights movement in the mid-to-late 1960’s and 1970s was being energized by young Blacks who wanted to see change happen. The Black Power movements took to the global stage with movements in parts of Africa and Asia. The more radical factions began to

give rise to Black Nationalism rather than integration. Prominent figures and organizations such as Stokely Carmichael, Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam, and the Black Panther party. The tactics of protests were still used to raise attention to the plight of African Americans; however, confrontations often turned violent with many arrests, beatings, incarcerations and deaths.<sup>6</sup>

### **In the new millennium**

**National Action Network (NAN)** Founded in 1991 by Reverend Al Sharpton, NAN works within the spirit and tradition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to promote a modern civil rights agenda that includes the fight for one standard of justice, decency and equal opportunities. NAN has worked to uphold police accountability, advocating locally and nationally.<sup>7</sup>

**#Black Lives Matter** was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer. Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. *By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives.*

The spirit of BLM has its roots in the fiber of American history. Beginning with the emancipation from slavery, the relationship between any type of law enforcement, organized or “sanctioned” (permitted), and the Black community as a people has been strained at best and deadly at worst. The apprehension, incarceration, and execution of black people on the mere suspicion of committing a crime has provoked fear and mistrust of law enforcement and the justice system as a whole.

### **Conclusion – connect the dots:**

Throughout the history of the civil rights movement, one can see a pattern: the cry for equality, a “triggering” event, protests (non-violent

<sup>2</sup> NAACP: <https://www.history.com/topics/civil-rights-movement/naACP>

<sup>3</sup> SCLC: <https://nationalsclc.org/about/history/>

<sup>4</sup> CORE: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/congress-of-racial-equality>

<sup>5</sup> SNCC: <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/sncc#:~:text=The%20SNCC%2C%20or%20Student%20Non,the%20movement%20more%20radical%20branches>

<sup>6</sup> Black Power Movement: <https://www.history.com/news/black-power-movement-civil-rights>

<sup>7</sup> NAN: <https://nationalactionnetwork.net/about/>

and violent), call to action, and eventually some progress. Considering police reform, the need to quench the mutual mistrust between the Black Community and law enforcement is paramount. The issues fought for by the NAACP are no different from those being championed by NAN and BLM. The baton to champion this cause continues to be passed to the next generation with hope for solutions.

#### IV. Policing in America

The U.S approach to policing differs from those of other advanced democracies in terms of organization, funding, training, relations with minority communities, use of force, and accountability.<sup>8</sup> Many Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations have more centralized police organizations with standardized training, oversight, and disciplinary procedures. The United States has about 18,000 local, state, and law enforcement agencies. The United States ranks about in the middle of police spending. It spends about 1% of GDP on police, mostly through local government. Finland spends less than 0.5% and Hungary spends the most at roughly 1.4%. U.S. policing has been criticized for its use of “asset forfeiture” wherein police departments seize assets of citizens.

U.S. police training programs last 21 weeks on average<sup>9</sup>, whereas some European programs last more than 3 years. According to U.S. Department of Justice statistics, U.S. programs spent the most time --71 hours-- on firearm skills compared to 21 hours on de-escalation training.

In contrast to more than a dozen other democracies that generally do not arm their police

“What the history does is it allows us to decouple the idea of public safety from police. What actually stops people in communities from killing each other? What actually helps people who are mentally ill? Are those things police? The answer is no. We have to build another institution to do public safety.”

Chenjerai Kumanyika , *Origins of policing in America*

<sup>8</sup> Amelia Cheatham and Lindsay Maizland, “How Police Compare in Different Democracies,” Council on Foreign Relations, July 30, 2020 <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/how-police-compare-different-democracies>.

<sup>9</sup> Brian Reaves, “State and Local Law Enforcement Training Academies, 2013,” U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, July 2016.

with guns, U.S. police are armed with military-grade equipment. Countries with unarmed police tightly regulate civilian gun ownership. U.S. civilian gun ownership is estimated to be 120 guns for every 100 residents; 44 police officers were gunned down in 2019.

The U.S. leads other democracies in the number of people killed by police. That number in 2019 was 1,099 or 33.5 per million people. The next highest country was Canada with 36 total and 9.8 per million. In the US, Black Americans are overrepresented among the victims of police violence.

United Nations guidelines state that an effective police accountability system has civilian control over the police, investigates misconduct, and swiftly addresses misconduct.<sup>10</sup> Many democratic countries rely upon national independent oversight bodies. In contrast, U.S. law allows police departments to primarily investigate themselves. Moreover, U.S. police officers rarely face legal consequences for shooting and killing civilians and a controversial doctrine known as qualified immunity often shields them from lawsuits.

#### V. How can we improve Police/Community Interactions?

Policy solutions for police violence can found in changing how police and community interact: Here are a few of the concepts that can be studied in more detail.

**Reduce frequency of police interactions with citizens:** End strategies focused on petty crime enforcement such as “broken windows” and “stop and frisk”; decriminalize substance use, mental illness, vagrancy, public protest, curfew, other petty nonviolent acts; use civilians for traffic enforcement. Support and strengthen community-based alternatives to calling the police; switch to civilian or social worker interventions rather than police for certain types of calls such as public intoxication, unruly children, trespassing; get police out of schools; reduce power of private police forces (such as university forces).

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Handbook on Police Accountability, Oversight and Integrity*, New York, 2011.

# CAMPAIGN ZERO

WE CAN LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE THE POLICE DON'T KILL PEOPLE  
BY LIMITING POLICE INTERVENTIONS, IMPROVING COMMUNITY INTERACTIONS  
AND ENSURING ACCOUNTABILITY.



WE CAN LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES DO GOOD, NOT HARM.

## Improve police interactions with citizens:

Develop and train police and community partners in nonviolent de-escalation strategies; offer extensive training on strategy, mental illness, multicultural response. Train against implicit bias. Overhaul 911 to assure that appropriate information is communicated; return to presumption of innocence during arrests; address the post-traumatic stress disorder and fear suffered by police. Get guns off the streets to make interactions safer. Make time for relationship building that includes police as community partners.

## Reduce the deadliness of police interactions:

Require de-escalation; Have a clear use-of-force continuum; Ban specific dangerous practices like choke holds; control shooting at moving vehicles and high-speed chases; give police a duty to intervene when others use force excessively, etc.

## Change police culture to change interactions:

Require higher educational and screening standards for hiring; national certification requirements; gender and racial diversity in hiring; encourage police to live in or near areas they police; civilian leadership; changing an us-them/military culture; empower/require police to speak out against bad policing and excessive force; uncover and address white supremacist groups, gangs and corruption within some police forces; changes to police unions and budget negotiations.

## Rethink community safety in a broader way:

Focus on crime prevention; reduce mass incarceration; offer restorative justice; focus on

social justice; invest in housing, jobs and education; redirect funding from police to ending poverty; treat violence using public health strategies especially with youth and young adults; national mental health and substance use strategies; consider the daily violence of racism and gender based violence in safety response.

## VI. Police Reform Proposals

**Change Police Role:** Americans must decide what the basic role of police in society is and decide whether coercive government actions will bring about justice.

**End the “war on drugs.”** Some authors suggest that President Nixon’s 1971 “war on drugs,” has disproportionately impacted Blacks, removing opportunities for education, stripping them of voting rights, and making future employment more difficult. Alex S. Vitale noted that legalizing gambling and alcohol reduced the scope of policing without reducing public safety.<sup>11</sup> Almost 50 years ago, former police chief James F. Ahern wrote that solving drug addiction cannot be looked upon as basically a law enforcement problem.<sup>12</sup>

**Proactive and Preventive Policing:** Through *Community Problem Oriented Policing* police and communities together can use data and collaboration to proactively prevent the conditions that lead to crime or violence. Cincinnati’s collaborative agreement called for a Community-Police partnering center and trained neighborhoods and police in SARA<sup>13</sup> (Scanning Analysis Response Assessment) for data-informed community-based crime prevention.

## Change Police Organization

**Abolish or reform police unions** Recent studies suggest that there is a correlation between the protections afforded in police collective-bargaining contracts and police violence.<sup>14</sup> Jeff Jacoby wrote

<sup>11</sup> Alex S. Vitale, *The End of Policing*, (Brooklyn, New York: Versio, 2018).

<sup>12</sup> James F. Ahern, *Police in Trouble: Out Frightening Crisis in Law Enforcement*, (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1972).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/police/assets/File/Procedures/12370.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Steven Greenhouse, “How Police Unions Enable and Conceal Abuses of Power,” *The New Yorker*, June 18, 2020.

“most police officers are not like Derek Chauvin. They are decent individuals who care about their communities and go to dangerous lengths to protect them. They deserve generous compensation, reasonable due process if accused of wrongdoing, and civil service insulation from political mistreatment. But not unions.”<sup>15</sup> Some local unions have voted to oust police unions from the AFL-CIO. Minimally, collective bargaining contracts should remove barriers to effective misconduct investigations and civilian oversight and keep officers’ disciplinary history assessable to police departments and the public.

**Demilitarize the police** Limit police use of military grade equipment and tactics. The Special Weapons and Tactics (“S.W.A.T.”) units were created to handle violent emergencies. Today, 90% of S.W.A.T. deployments are to execute search warrants. Declines in crime rates have created room for less-warlike law enforcement.<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Mummolo wrote that militarized police units do not make the public or police safer, and reduce the trust necessary for the police to operate.<sup>17</sup>

**Police department insurance** Some authors suggest that police department insurance following the model used in healthcare would incentivize departments to fire and not allow “bad apples” from working in law enforcement again and replace taxpayer money payouts for police misconduct.<sup>18</sup>

**Rebuild from the ground up** Defund the police supporters call for a complete restart from entrenched police culture. Some communities have called for disbanding a particularly troubled local police force to merging with a county or other/city force. Others suggest reorganizing into a civilian public safety model that does not use military leadership, rules and structures.

In Cincinnati, a group called “People’s Safety Reimagined” is calling for an amendment to the City Charter replacing police with a public safety department which includes peace officers, mental

health and social services, enforcement and felony crimes divisions and citizens complaint authority.<sup>19</sup>

### **Change Police Funding**

**Reform civil asset forfeiture and end “policing for profit”** The doctrine that incentivizes police to seize property that was allegedly used in the commission of a crime should be reformed. This doctrine has resulted in police departments taking more property than burglars in America.<sup>20</sup>

For-profit policing incentivizes ticketing and arrests unrelated to public safety, creating a climate of distrust for law enforcement (such as occurred in Ferguson). It exacerbates inequality when wealthier individuals can buy themselves out of penalties.

**Shift funding to mental health/social worker response** 25% of the civilians who were shot and killed by police in 2018 were experiencing mental health crises. In Cincinnati, the Human Services Chamber is engaging with Cincinnati Police to ask them to review roles where social workers can be called instead of police; other communities have piloted this type of work.

### **Update Training:**

**21<sup>st</sup> C Training** Along with training in law and gun use, police need training in customer service, communication, de-escalation, cultural competence, appropriate interventions. According to the *Washington Post*, more than half of the cases of mentally ill persons killed by police involved police agencies that did not provide officers with state-of-the-art training to work with the mentally ill.<sup>21</sup>

In summer 2020 Hamilton County<sup>22</sup> instructed that all sheriffs be given “bystander” training to learn how to intervene and report disrespect and excessive force from their fellow officers. Hamilton County has also ordered implicit bias training and

<sup>15</sup> Jeff Jacoby, “Don’t reform police unions. Abolish them,” *Boston Globe*, June 16, 2020.

<sup>16</sup> “Police violence, race, and protest in America,” *The Economist*, June 4, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Mummolo, “What I learned by studying militarized policing,” *The Atlantic*, August 23, 2018.

<sup>18</sup> Rashawn Ray, “Bad Apples Come From Rotten Trees in Policing,” Brookings, May 30, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.citybeat.com/arts-culture/culture/blog/21145262/peoples-safety-reimagined-wants-to-make-public-safety-in-cincinnati-a-holistic-endeavor-through-reinvestment>

<sup>20</sup> David French, “Police Reform and the Rise of Bill of Rights Republicans,” *The Dispatch*, June 9, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Wesley Lowery, Kimberly Kindy, Keith Alexander, Julie Tate, Jennifer Jenkins, and Steve Rich, “Distraught People, Deadly Results,” *Washington Post*, June 30, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Hamilton County Resolution Racism as a public health crisis:

[https://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_3788196/File/Government/Board%20of%20County%20Commissioners/Commissioners/County%20Resolution.PDF](https://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3788196/File/Government/Board%20of%20County%20Commissioners/Commissioners/County%20Resolution.PDF)

training in the history of slavery and reconstruction for an understanding of structural racism.

**Eliminate the “warrior mindset”** New police officers may be taught that their community is a battle ground. Police officers should be trained to diffuse confrontation, not to seek it. Build respect for the community and for diversity into the code of ethics and use that code in training, discipline and daily activity.<sup>23</sup>

### **Change Use of Force:**

**8 Can’t Wait** Campaign Zero claims that eight procedural rules can decrease police violence by 72%: ban chokeholds and strangleholds, require de-escalation, require warning before shooting, exhaust all other means before shooting, duty to intervene<sup>24</sup>, ban shooting at moving vehicles, require use of force continuum<sup>25</sup>, and require comprehensive reporting.<sup>26</sup> These policies have been adopted by the City of Cincinnati by summer 2020, but not by our suburban police forces.

**Roll back “no knock” raids** Citing the death of Breanna Taylor in her own home, activists say that it is inevitable that people who have a gun at home for safety will use it when their home is invaded, leading to a gun battle. Most police departments, on the other hand, are adamant that they need the advantage of surprise. Judges can also take a more active role with the warrants they issue.

### **Build Accountability:**

**Visibility is important:** Require reporting and analysis of data on uses and threats of force; require body cameras; promote public reporting and information about misconduct.

**Eliminate “qualified immunity”** This doctrine shields police and all other government officials from accountability for their actions unless victims can show that the rights were “clearly established.” The Supreme Court declined to hear 9 cases involving the doctrine

<sup>23</sup> Cincinnati Police Code of Ethics is here: <https://www.cincinnati-oh.gov/police/linkservid/71B10956-57E1-4D65-B203A105424A1022/>

<sup>24</sup> Requires bystander officers to step in if a fellow officer is using excessive force and formally requires police officers to break the “blue wall of silence” and report such incidents to supervisors.

<sup>25</sup> A specific set of requirements governing what kinds of weapons can be used versus what levels of resistance.

<sup>26</sup> Matthew Yglesias, “8 Can’t Wait, explained,” [Vox](#), June 5, 2020.



of qualified immunity that it created back in 1982.

**Who polices the police?** Civilian review boards must be empowered with data, staffing, financial resources and enforcement abilities. Communities should use independent prosecution for police violence. County prosecutors work daily with police and rely on their testimony in Court and may be unwilling to call them into question.

Requiring personal liability insurance could focus enforcement on outcomes rather than intent. Insurance does not ask whether a person is racist, but whether their actions caused expensive problems; this is a standard of proof.

Many departments have reformed due to federal oversight, Dept of Justice Consent decrees and lost focus when that oversight ended.

**National database** One strategy to prevent convicted officers from rehire is a national database that tracks terminated officers and criminal convictions. President Trump signed an executive order in June 2020 directing the Attorney General to create such a registry.

**Use the Court System** Prosecutors, judges and juries all have responsibility when they try cases despite police officer misconduct. For example, one prosecutor in California called on his peers to refuse to indict “resisting arrest” if the police cannot provide body camera evidence.

## VII. League Positions:

**Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all.** Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans .... Support equal rights for all under state and federal law regardless of race, color gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

**LWVUS supports violence prevention programs** in all communities; public and private development and coordination of programs that emphasize the primary prevention of violence; the active role of government and social institutions in preventing violent behavior; the allocation of public monies in government programs to prevent violence.

**Following our own international guidelines.** Many of the League's international policies also focus on protection of human rights, diplomacy, and non-military solutions to protect the peace.

## VIII. What Can We Do?

**Ask: should you call the police?** As community members, we need to stop expecting police to solve community problems that are not primarily criminal justice related. Do we call the police when our neighbors play music too loud? When a person is experiencing a mental health crisis? When someone is begging on the street? When neighborhood kids are being rambunctious? Worse, as recently documented online through the "Karen" meme, do we call the police as a way to enforce racial divisions or a sense of class or race privilege?

**Demand better law enforcement:** The Sheriff is elected. The chief of police reports to the City Manager, who reports to elected Mayor and City Council. Yet most community police reform efforts have required law suits and consent decrees because many politicians believe that anything less than unconditional support for police will lose elections. We need to pay attention to suburban and rural forces, not just those in big cities.

**Participate in community-oriented problem solving:** There are many police-community initiatives throughout the nation. In Cincinnati, police attend community council meetings; we can attend too, ask probing questions and work to prevent crime instead of only responding to it.

**Stop the school to prison pipeline:** Review school policies and practices that may push children and into the criminal justice system and advocate for strategies that are more effective at prevention and early intervention.

**Retrain ourselves. Be actively anti-racist:** Americans can learn to understand our own history of racism and of law enforcement as tools for racist public policy. While policing is a technical, government and policy issue, we cannot resolve it if we pretend that "we do not see color" in the issue.

## IX. Further Reading/Watching

<http://cincinnati.goddamn.com>

<https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

[www.joincampaignzero.org](http://www.joincampaignzero.org)

<https://www.knowablemagazine.org/article/society/2020/racially-biased-policing-can-it-be-fixed>

<https://www.joincampaignzero.org/solutions#solutionsoverview>

<https://truththeory.com/17-solutions-to-tackle-police-brutality-in-america/>

<https://8cantwait.org/>

<https://www.naacp.org/campaigns/pathways-police-reform-community-mobilization-toolkit/>

[https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/Implementation\\_Guide.pdf](https://cops.usdoj.gov/pdf/taskforce/Implementation_Guide.pdf)

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/07/15/police-shooting-study-retracted/>

<https://wapo.st/2G07YIz>

<https://www.citybeat.com/arts-culture/culture/blog/21145262/peoples-safety-reimagined-wants-to-make-public-safety-in-cincinnati-a-holistic-endeavor-through-reinvestment>

## X. Discussion Questions:

1. How were you raised to view the police? How has that changed for you now? How does this differ based on gender, generation, race?
2. This paper discusses a number of possible changes to address violence. Which ones would you prioritize?
3. How can community members take action to change the relationship between police and the community?
4. How can the LWVUS new statement on systemic racism inspire or influence advocacy by our LWVCA?