



June 12, 2020

Congress of the United States
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Senators and Representatives of the California Delegation,

As the nation reels in response to the death of yet another unarmed black man while in police custody, we share the devastation and downright anger of the protesters who are peacefully assembling across the country. George Floyd was a man in distress crying out for help, and his death should not have happened. As peace officers, our role is to serve and protect – a responsibility that we cannot fulfill without the trust of the communities we have sworn an oath to. When that trust is broken by officers whose actions are inconsistent with the missions and goals of our profession, we too are outraged – and we have a duty to intercede, an obligation to speak out and a moral imperative to hold those officers accountable. We have an opportunity to channel this righteous anger into action and lasting reform, which is why we are writing to you today.

Several of our federal elected officials have restarted the dialogue about legislation needed to reduce the use of force across the country. Allow us to offer our experience and knowledge from California.

Last year, California took a comprehensive look at how we could change our own policies at the state level to minimize the use of force in our communities – a process that resulted in Governor Newsom signing [SB 230](#) and [AB 392](#) into law. Together, these two laws are the most significant change in California's use of force policies since 1872. AB 392 and SB 230:

- Mandate every California law enforcement officer to receive the most robust training in the nation strictly designed to minimize the use of force.
- Require every law enforcement officer to adhere to specific, publicly available guidelines for when they are authorized to use force.
- Establish specific policies across all law enforcement departments requiring de-escalation, an officer's duty to intercede, rendering medical aid, proportional use of force and more.
- Set forth and standardize detailed requirements for reporting all instances when force is used.
- Specify that use of force policies and training are considered in legal proceedings.

To develop the SB 230 and AB 392 legislative package, we spent more than a year surveying and collecting input from legislators, the American Civil Liberties Union, our Attorney General,

Brian R. Marvel
President

Damon Kurtz
Vice President

Tim Davis
Treasurer

Randy Beintema
Secretary



diverse experts, and impacted stakeholders from throughout the state. We assessed the proven best practices from around the country, and we incorporated everything we heard and everything we learned into California's new use of force laws. While these laws just took effect in January and will take time to fully implement, we believe they provide a foundation that could help inform the basis for change nationwide.

While we acknowledge that no legislative or policy solution will solve the pervasive racism in America, we know that we must do everything in our power to minimize the use of force across the nation.

It is time for America to adopt a national use of force standard. It is time for America to mandate that all peace officers have a duty to intercede. It is time for America to raise the bar for recruitment and training standards for all peace officers in every city and state across this country. And it is time for Congress to ensure that state, local, and tribal police departments across the country have the funds they need to effectively implement these changes.

To make real progress and enact lasting reform, we must work together. We must replace fear and anger with empathy and understanding. We must make a genuine effort to understand what it is like to walk in each other's shoes. We must seek counsel from those whose backgrounds, beliefs and experiences are different from our own. It is incumbent upon our elected leaders to provide the forum for that discussion.

Very Truly Yours,

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Peace Officers Research Association of California

Brian R. Marvel
President

Brian R. Marvel
President

Damon Kurtz
Vice President

Tim Davis
Treasurer

Randy Beintema
Secretary