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June 23, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Senate Democratic Leader  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leaders McConnell and Schumer:

On behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), I write to express our strong desire to advance a policing reform bill that will meet the historic moment we face as a nation and finally answer longstanding demands to put an end to the police violence that has plagued the Black community in time immemorial.

Over the past several weeks, countless Americans, both Black and White, young and old, in cities and towns from coast to coast, have taken to the streets to protest the senseless murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks, and many others. In fact, this movement has sparked international attention, with protests in London, Berlin, and Paris, among other cities, and the United Nations debating police brutality and systemic racism in America. The world is watching, and history will judge us all for our answer to the pleas for justice and peace.

Our answer is the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, which is the culmination of decades of work by CBC Members, including one of our founders. This transformative bill provides meaningful reforms to prevent tragedy in the first place and deliver justice to the families of victims when all else fails. This includes an end to qualified immunity for law enforcement and racial and ethnic profiling, a federal ban on choke holds and no knock warrants, and a national use of force standard. In addition to a national accreditation system to raise the standard of the policing profession, this bill includes grant funding for community-based organizations to help reimagine what public safety can look like going forward.

Unfortunately, the Justice Act under consideration in the Senate does not include these much-needed reforms and, overall, fails to meet the moment that this movement demands. We agree with your statement, Leader McConnell: The American people deserve more than political posturing. They deserve leadership at the highest levels of government to take a stand to end racial injustice in policing.

Sincerely,

Karen Bass