August 6, 2020

The Honorable Kamala Harris
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support of H.R. 7120 - The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act

Dear Senator Harris:

The City of Beverly Hills supports the House passed H.R. 7120, the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, and urges you to work with your Senate colleagues to enact this important legislation. The bill proposes significant police reforms targeted at eliminating racism, discrimination, and the use of excessive force by police officers during pursuits and arrests of suspects.

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act would ban chokeholds, enforce national transparency standards, demilitarize the police, and push accountability for officer misconduct with a national database to track offenses. More specifically, the bill prohibits federal, state, and local law enforcement from racial, religious and discriminatory profiling, and mandates training to prevent this conduct.

Additionally, the bill bans carotid holds and no-knock warrants at the federal level and limits the transfer of military-grade equipment through the Pentagon’s 1033 Program to state and local law enforcement agencies. The legislation also mandates the use of dashboard cameras and body cameras for federal officers and requires state and local law enforcement to use existing federal funds to ensure the use of police body cameras.

In order to prevent “problem police officers” from moving from agency to agency, H.R. 7120 establishes a National Police Misconduct Registry, providing officer accountability through transparency. The bill reforms qualified immunity so individuals are not barred from recovering damages when police violate their constitutional rights. The legislation amends federal criminal statute from “willfulness” to a “recklessness” standard to successfully identify and prosecute police misconduct.
H.R. 7120 also requires state and local law enforcement agencies to report use of force data, disaggregated by race, sex, disability, religion, age. The measure, moreover, authorizes the Department of Justice to issue subpoenas in investigations of police departments for a pattern or practice of discrimination.

Furthermore, H.R. 7120 establishes public safety innovation grants for community-based organizations to create local commissions and task forces to help communities re-imagine and develop concrete, just, and equitable public safety approaches. It also creates law enforcement development and training programs to develop best practices and requires the creation of law enforcement accreditation standard recommendations based on President Obama’s Taskforce on 21st Century policing.

Finally, H.R. 7120 has garnered an array of endorsements from national advocacy groups including the NAACP, the AFL-CIO and the American College of Physicians. The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act calls for police transparency, accountability, training and reform, initiatives Congress should enact before the end of the year.

For these reasons, the City of Beverly Hills proudly supports H.R. 7120 and looks forward to working with you to enact this legislation.

Sincerely,

Lester J. Friedman
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills