

NEW JERSEY, NEW JUSTICE:

Three Immediate Steps to Hold Law Enforcement Accountable as We Reimagine Policing

The recent killings of Black people by police have once again exposed the racial injustice and abuses of power endemic in policing. These problems are not incidental. They are built-in.

Our government has chosen to allow police to threaten and use force and violence to impose social control, and it comes directly into conflict with our rights and well-being.

- We must **reevaluate and re-envision** the role of police.
- We must **end the militarization of police** and the mass surveillance of communities.
- We must **reject the pattern of instinctively deploying police** as the answer to all perceived societal deficiencies.
- We must critically examine the resources that government unquestioningly devotes to police and **divest** from policing by narrowing the size, scope, and purpose of law enforcement.

- We must **repair the harm done by police** and **reinvest** in our communities.

The road to transforming policing is complex. No law will eradicate centuries of racism, abuse, and toxic police culture.

To help repair the injustices endured by those most vulnerable to, and impacted by, police abuses, New Jersey must rein in police powers and redirect taxpayers' funds to resources and programs that empower, serve, and truly protect our communities. As New Jersey begins a community-driven process toward reimagining policing, it can immediately institute three policies focused on transparency and accountability. **These policies represent only a sliver of the wholesale reimagining of law enforcement our country desperately needs**, but they are long-needed tools for better accountability that the Legislature can address today.

1 TELL THE PUBLIC WHAT POLICE ARE DOING: MAKE RECORDS OF POLICE MISCONDUCT AND POLICE TACTICS PUBLIC

Police departments operate with utter secrecy. They shield information from the public about officers who commit misconduct and tools for surveillance. Concealing that information undercuts community control and prioritizes police who abuse power over the communities who bear the damage. **Disclose it.**

2 HARNESS THE POWER OF COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT: EMBRACE STRONG CIVILIAN REVIEW BOARDS OF POLICE

State law enforcement leaders oppose a key check on police: oversight from communities they claim to serve. People must have authority to investigate, set policy, and hold officers responsible for their actions. **Let us exercise it.**

3 ELIMINATE THE LEGAL PROTECTIONS THAT LET POLICE ESCAPE CONSEQUENCES: END QUALIFIED IMMUNITY

The legal principle of qualified immunity, like in federal law, also exists in New Jersey law and makes it nearly impossible to hold police accountable when they use excessive force, commit crimes, or even kill people. **End it.**

These policies are only a part of the conversation. To reimagine policing, we must reimagine police. And we must do so with Black and Brown community voices leading the way.

New Jersey demands action, not acquiescence. The time for bold action is now.

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