



May 18, 2021

The Honorable Nancy P. Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin O. McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steny Hoyer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressional Leaders,

Government Accountability Project and the undersigned 170 organizations write to seek your leadership in protecting individuals with best practice anti-retaliation rights for reporting law enforcement misconduct in any justice reform legislation regarding policing. Legislation without proper accountability makes laws unenforceable, which can intensify community backlash and become magnets for cynicism and resentment. This need for accountability and enforceability is why Congress included whistleblower protection in over 60 federal remedial laws, including 16 times unanimously since the start of the millennium. Now the same standards outlined by Congress previously must be applied in all policing bills for those reforms to be credible.

The truth is changing the course of history. Unfortunately, accountability in law enforcement remains a major challenge. Accountability-free abuses of power have become a way of life, and for current reform proposals to work as intended, they must have effective measures protecting those who bear witness in order to enforce the law against law enforcement officers who break it. Video footage has led to a national reckoning, but sometimes it takes more than a smartphone to protect and defend victims of police brutality. In many cases, accountability requires testimony from those willing to bear witness, which are often fellow officers and law enforcement personnel.

However, the “blue wall of silence,” compounded by the lack of anti-retaliation protection for law enforcement, forces law enforcement officers to risk their careers, safety, or even their lives when they choose to blow the whistle. That is why we are asking Congress to include whistleblower rights in police reform bills.

How can whistleblowers make a difference enforcing police reforms? Their testimony could turn citizen rights into reality for major safeguards such as:

- the ban on chokeholds;
- controls on other deadly force;
- expanded liability;
- pattern and practice investigations;
- oversight of mandatory body cameras;
- restrictions on no knock warrants;
- controls on transfer of military equipment to state and local police;
- open and transparent forensic crime laboratory operations;
- accurate and complete information for a national registry; and
- an oversight record based on the whole truth for all oversight and enforcement.

Whistleblowing for law enforcement is “committing the truth,” because they are treated as if they had committed a crime. But the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth is the foundation for legitimate reform. There can be no higher priority than protecting those who provide it.

Sincerely,

Government Accountability Project  
 350.org  
 Academics Stand Against Poverty  
 ACORN8  
 Advocacy for Principled Action in Government  
 Advocating Opportunity  
 Affiliation of Christian Engineers  
 Agape Healing Hearts  
 Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
 Alianza Americas  
 Alianza Nacional de Campesinas  
 Alliance for Human Research Protection  
 Alliance for Justice  
 American Association for Justice  
 American Civil Liberties Union  
 American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
 Asian Law Alliance  
 Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO  
 Association of Health Care Journalists  
 Blacks in law Enforcement of America  
 Blue Wave Postcard Movement  
 California Communities Against Toxics  
 CantWait  
 Casa Ruby  
 Center for Democracy & Technology  
 Center for International Policy  
 Center for Justice & Democracy  
 Center for Media and Democracy  
 Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc.

CEO Pipe Organs/Golden Ponds Farm  
Citizens Awareness Network  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)  
Citizens' Environmental Coalition  
Clean Elections Texas  
Cleveland Park Congregational UCC  
Common Cause  
Connecticut Civil Rights Council  
Constitutional Alliance  
Consumer Action  
Corruption kills  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
CovertAction Magazine  
Cumberland Countians For Peace & Justice  
Daily Kos  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Demand Progress  
DemCast USA  
Democracy 21  
Dialysis Advocates & Associates  
Digital Democracy Project  
Dignity and Power Now  
Disaster Accountability Project  
ECI Communications  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Essential Information  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Fight for the Future  
Food & Water Action  
FracTracker Alliance  
Freedom Network USA  
Freedom of the Press Foundation  
Glynn Environmental Coalition  
Government Information Watch  
Greenpeace US  
Haitian Bridge Alliance  
HBCU Collective  
Hip Hop Caucus  
HIPS  
Hispanic Federation  
Humanist Society of New Mexico  
Indiana Coalition for Open Government  
Innocence Project  
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio  
International Association of Whistleblowers (IAW)  
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement

Jobs with Justice of East Tennessee  
Kentucky Resources Council, Inc.  
Lamplighter Project  
Latin American Youth Center  
Law Enforcement Action Partnership  
Liberty Shared  
Living United For Change In Arizona  
Main Street Project  
Mainers for Accountable Leadership  
Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights  
Muslim American Law Enforcement Association  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)  
National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers  
National Association of Social Workers  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Coalition Against Censorship  
National Education Association  
National Employment Lawyers Association  
National Immigration Project (NIP-NLG)  
National Judicial Conduct and Disability Law Project, Inc.  
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium  
National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights  
National Organization for Women  
National Security Counselors  
National Whistleblower Center  
National Whistleblower Legal Defense & Education Fund  
National Workrights Institute  
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility  
New American Leaders Action Fund  
New Mexico Environmental Law Center  
New Moral Majority  
NOMOS Consulting  
Northern Illinois Justice for Our Neighbors  
Open The Government  
Our Bodies Ourselves  
Pax Advisory  
Pax Christi USA  
Peace and Freedom Party, California  
People For the American Way  
People's Parity Project  
Pinos Y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste (PCUN)  
Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa  
Poligon Education Fund  
Press Freedom Defense Fund of First Look Institute  
PRESS4WORD  
Privacy Times

Professional Managers Association  
Project Censored/Media Freedom Foundation  
Project On Government Oversight  
Protect All Children's Environment  
Public Citizen  
Public Justice  
Public Justice Center  
R Street Institute  
RAICES  
Restore The Fourth  
Right to life A4O  
RootsAction.org  
Rural Coalition  
S.T.O.P. - Surveillance Technology Oversight Project  
Santa Clara County Wage Theft Coalition  
Shadow World Investigations  
Society of Professional Journalists  
Sojourners  
Stand Up Republic  
Strategies for Justice  
Students for Sensible Drug Policy  
Supporting and Mentoring Youth Advocates and Leaders (SMYAL)  
Tahirih Justice Center  
Taxpayers Protection Alliance  
Texas Civil Rights Project  
The Judicial Accountability Movement  
The Multiracial Activist  
The Oakland Institute  
The Rutherford Institute  
The Signals Network  
The Workers Circle  
Transparency International - U.S. Office  
Truckers Justice Center  
Tully Center for Free Speech  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
UNISHKA Research Service, Inc  
UNITED SIKHS  
Visual Teaching Technologies  
Voices for Progress  
Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs  
Washington Office on Latin America  
Whistleblower Network News  
Whistleblowers of America  
Wisconsin Faith Voices for Justice  
Women's Action for New Directions  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom US

Woodhull Freedom Foundation  
Workplace Fairness  
X-Lab

Cc:

The Honorable Jerry Nadler  
Chair, U.S. House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Carolyn Maloney  
Chair, U.S. House Oversight and Reform Committee

The Honorable James Comer  
Ranking Member, U.S. House Oversight and Reform Committee

The Honorable Richard Durbin,  
Chair, U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Charles Grassley  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Gary Peters  
Chair, U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

The Honorable Rob Portman  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

The Congressional Black Caucus

The House and Senate Whistleblower Protection Caucuses