



[President Trump Signs an Executive Order on Police Reform](#)

This week, President Trump signed an executive order on police reform, as both Democratic and Republican federal lawmakers initiate proposals on Capitol Hill as well. In a speech given before signing the order, Trump stated that it would ban the use of police chokeholds “except if the officer’s life is at risk.” It will also create a national database to track police misconduct, condition Department of Justice (DOJ) grants on whether local departments meet certain training standards, and provide them with incentives to involve trained professionals like social workers to respond to calls for certain nonviolent issues such as mental health, homelessness, and drug addiction. The Trump administration worked with police groups, religious leaders, and family organizations to craft the executive order, according to senior officials. It comes in the aftermath of the widespread outrage surrounding the recent killing of George Floyd, which has sparked worldwide protests against police brutality and racial injustice.

Speaking in the White House Rose Garden as he unveiled the executive order, Trump framed his remarks with strong talk regarding “law and order” and defense of the police. While it attempts to tackle some of the main concerns regarding policing, Trump’s executive order does not address the issue of qualified immunity, which reform advocates say protects police from liability in excessive force cases. The White House has said that ending it is a “non-starter” for any potential reform measures. The president’s action also drew criticism for not going far enough, with some arguing that because the majority of law enforcement decisions are made at the state and local levels, incentivizing police departments using federal grant money is an insufficient deterrent. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) echoed the sentiment that more needed to be done, saying “While the president has finally acknowledged the need for police reform, one modest, inadequate executive order will not make up for his decades of inflammatory rhetoric and his recent policies designed to roll back the progress that we’ve made in previous years.”

The murder of George Floyd and the subsequent protests have triggered a significant shift in public perceptions towards policing. A recent Washington Post poll found that over two-thirds of Americans believe that Floyd’s killing indicates broader issues in the way police treat black Americans, as opposed to merely an isolated incident. Additionally, 57% of Americans surveyed and 49% of white respondents now believe that police are more likely to use excessive force against black Americans. Back in 2014, even after the killing of Eric Garner in police custody, only 33% of Americans and 26% of white Americans felt that way.

President Trump’s executive order comes while police reform proposals are also being considered in both houses of Congress. Last week, Congressional Democrats unveiled a package entitled ‘The Justice in Policing Act’ and held a House Judiciary Committee markup yesterday with the aim of voting sometime next week. Meanwhile, Senator Tim Scott (R-SC) and other Senate Republicans introduced their respective police reform bill yesterday as well and are also planning to begin deliberations next week.