

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/why-ending-police-violence-and-racist-policing-is-a-childrens-issue/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Our nation is facing with new clarity a dire crisis that has always been present and pervasive in our society: **our deadly culture of police violence and systemic racism**. As America reckons with the centuries of trauma and pain inflicted on Black people in this country, millions of people have taken to the streets in protest and are desperately [crying out for justice and change](#). Cries that we have heard all too often, but that has been blatantly ignored.

The systematic destruction of Black lives in the United States is a national, moral crisis, but not a new one. Police officers have taken the lives of children like 12-year-old Tamir Rice, youth like 18-year-old Michael Brown, and adults like Breonna Taylor and George Floyd. But let us be clear: no matter the age of the victim, police violence against Black Americans is a childrens issue.

From a young age, **Black children are not afforded the same rights as white children, despite living in a society that proclaims that all children are precious, innocent, and valuable**. Unlike white parents, Black parents do not have a choice about whether to have the race talk with their children early on. They often live in neighborhoods and schools where they are overexposed to violence and discrimination by police, school resource officers, and the juvenile justice system, simply because of the color of their skin. Put simply, the ongoing police violence and racist killings are not only deeply traumatic, but they also set Black children up for [dire mental health and development issues](#) for years to come. **Black children are also victims of early criminalization and [adultification](#) from their teachers, peers, and society, often for the same behaviors as white children**. For instance, [Black students are three times more likely to be suspended or expelled from schools](#) than their white peers. These ongoing racial disparities and justice issues must be addressed at a local, state, and federal level.

We joined many other civil rights organizations in [calling for swift action](#) to not only reduce police violence and provide robust accountability but calls to end systemic racism and invest in black communities.

In response to these demands, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) under Chairwoman Karen Bass on Monday introduced [H.R. 7120, the Justice in Policing Act of 2020](#), which would:

While these measures are a step in the right direction, **we must also confront the economic and political systems that devalue Black childrens lives and instead work to increase resources in communities that have [historically been underfunded and underserved](#)**. Minimally, that means increasing funding for better schools, housing, health, and nutrition for Black and brown children, as outlined in our [2020 State of Americas Children Report](#).

It also means we need comprehensive federal legislation that [centers the needs of children and youth](#) by:

We will continue to urge our nations leaders and our partners in the childrens advocacy field to take decisive action to fight for systems and communities that protect and value Black children and their livelihoods mean just as much as white children.

People of all walks of life **are demanding urgent, effective, and transformative change**. That starts with holding our police accountable and ending police violence, but it does not end there. Our children are watching. *When will they see a change?*

More information about the Justice in Policing Act can be found [here](#).

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The Childrens Defense Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our Federal Tax ID number is 52-0895622.

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