
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2021

Alderman Nikiya Dodd

(414) 286-3870

MEDIA ALERT

Council members urge President Biden to issue executive order banning the use of qualified immunity for police officers in wrongful-death lawsuits

In a letter sent today (**attached**) to President Joseph R. Biden, **Alderman Nikiya Dodd, Alderman Nik Kovac, Alderman Milele A. Coggs, Alderman JoCasta Zamarripa, Alderman Chantia Lewis, Alderman Robert J. Bauman and Alderman Marina Dimitrijevic** urge the president to issue an executive order to ban the use of qualified immunity for police officers in wrongful-death lawsuits brought against these officers, whether on- or off-duty.

The letter reads, in part: “We, the undersigned members of the Milwaukee Common Council, write to urge the issuance of an executive order to ban the use of qualified immunity for police officers in wrongful-death lawsuits brought against these officers, whether on- or off-duty. We further urge you to use your executive authority to implement the provisions of **H.R. 7120 -- George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020**.

It continues, in part “Your election has brought hope to a great many. There is now hope for real policies to help prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus and to help America recover from its effects. There is hope that the government elected to serve all of us will search for real answers to end structural racism and other causes of economic inequality. And there is hope that America can again join the community of nations as partner and friend.”

-More-

Letter to President Biden/ADD ONE

Directly addressing the fundamental existing unfairness with qualified immunity, the letter states: “H.R. 7120's provisions are, by some measures, modest: Qualified immunity should have been stripped from police officers involved in wrongful death lawsuits long ago. It has too often allowed them to escape the consequences of their unlawful, immoral actions. H.R. 7120 also makes a small adjustment to the criminal intent standard used in federal prosecution of police misconduct cases. And it seeks to establish a framework for the elimination of racial profiling at the national, state, and local level. These are small costs when weighed against the blood price the inaction of the past four years has brought.”

And the letter ends with: “Our prayers and best wishes go with you as you begin your term as president. We ask, as you begin to shape your agenda, that you remember and place priority on police reform of a kind represented by H.R. 7120 and that you demonstrate the urgency of this matter by doing so via executive order.”



CITY OF MILWAUKEE

City Hall, 200 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202 • www.city.milwaukee.gov

January 22, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We, the undersigned members of the Milwaukee Common Council, write to urge the issuance of an executive order to ban the use of qualified immunity for police officers in wrongful-death lawsuits brought against these officers, whether on- or off-duty. We further urge you to use your executive authority to implement the provisions of H.R. 7120 -- George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020.

Your election has brought hope to a great many. There is now hope for real policies to help prevent the further spread of the COVID-19 virus and to help America recover from its effects. There is hope that the government elected to serve all of us will search for real answers to end structural racism and other causes of economic inequality. And there is hope that America can again join the community of nations as partner and friend.

One issue we fear may have been lost in the tumult of the past several months, however, is the need to fundamentally change the way police agencies interact with the communities they are intended to serve. It is a tragic fact that George Floyd's death while in police custody was only the most recent in a long list of profound human tragedies carried out at the hands of racist, and many will argue corrupt, police officers. For all those who see in police officers not a friend but an oppressor, there can be no hope without the confidence that those responsible for shaping police policy are acting with urgency in their interest.

H.R. 7120's provisions are, by some measures, modest: Qualified immunity should have been stripped from police officers involved in wrongful death lawsuits long ago. It has too often allowed them to escape the consequences of their unlawful, immoral actions. H.R. 7120 also makes a small adjustment to the criminal intent standard used in federal prosecution of police misconduct cases. And it seeks to establish a framework for the elimination of racial profiling at the national, state, and local level. These are small costs when weighed against the blood price the inaction of the past four years has brought.

Our prayers and best wishes go with you as you begin your term as president. We ask, as you begin to shape your agenda, that you remember and place priority on police reform of a kind represented by H.R. 7120 and that you demonstrate the urgency of this matter by doing so via executive order.


Most respectfully,



Nikiya Dodd
Alderwoman, 5th District



Nik Kovac
Alderman, 3rd District



Robert J. Bauman
Alderman, 4th District



Milele A. Coggs
Alderwoman, 6th District



JoCasta Zamarripa
Alderwoman, 8th District



Chantia Lewis
Alderwoman, 9th District



Marina Dimitrijevic
Alderwoman, 14th District