

Resolution in Support of Criminal Justice Reform, Laws and Policies Promoting Fair and Impartial Policing

WHEREAS, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters encourages political action and legislation for Criminal Justice Reform and matters affecting African Americans and people of color within our membership, workplaces and our communities; and

WHEREAS, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters believes in the ideals of equal justice under the law, racial justice, police accountability, and human dignity for all people; and

WHEREAS, Trayvon Martin, an 18 yr. old young black male in Florida, was shot to death by George Zimmerman for walking in a neighborhood in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Michael Brown, an 18 yr. old young black male in Ferguson, Missouri, was shot to death by police for walking with his friend in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Tamir Rice, a 12 yr. old black child in Cleveland, Ohio, was shot to death by police for playing with his sister and a toy gun while at a park in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Eric Garner, a 43 yr. old black male in Staten Island, New York, was choked to death by police, in spite of Gardner saying 11 times “I can’t breathe” in 2014; and

WHEREAS, Freddie Gray, a 25 yr. old black male in Baltimore, Maryland, died from a nearly severed spinal cord after being arrested and placed in the back of a police van for 45 minutes in 2015; and

WHEREAS, Alton Sterling, a 37 yr. old black male in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was shot to death by police for selling CD’s, in 2016; and

WHEREAS, our Brother Philando Castile, a 32 yr. old black male, a public servant covered by a Teamsters Local 320 collective bargaining agreement, was shot to death by police as he sat in the driver’s seat of a car while his girlfriend and daughter watched on in 2016; and

WHEREAS, Botham Jean, a 26 yr. old black male in Dallas, Texas, was shot to death by an off duty police officer who allegedly thought he was an intruder after she entered the wrong apartment in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Ronald Green, a 42 yr. old black male from Louisiana, was pulled over in a traffic pursuit, tasered and beaten by officers and was pronounced dead when he arrived at the nearest hospital in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Breonna Taylor, a 26 yr. old black female in Louisville, Kentucky, a probationary employee who would have been covered by a Teamsters Local 783 collective bargaining agreement was shot to death by police while she slept, as undercover police officers executed a no-knock warrant based on misinformation in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Ahmaud Arbery, a 25 yr. old black male in Glynn County, Georgia, was shot to death after being pursued by three white residents while he was jogging through his neighborhood in 2020; and

WHEREAS, George Floyd, a 46 yr. old black male in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was killed by police, handcuffed with his face in the ground, while Officer Chauvin knelt on his neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds, while Floyd repeatedly said “I can’t breathe” as three other officers looked on in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Rashad Brooks, a 27 yr. old black male from Atlanta, Georgia, was shot to death by police after falling asleep at a drive-through in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Duante Wright, a 20 yr. old black male from Minneapolis, Minnesota, was shot to death by a police officer who allegedly confused her taser for her duty gun after being stopped for a traffic violation in 2021; and

WHEREAS, since the death of George Floyd in 2020, at least 181 black men and women have been killed by police, primarily during traffic stops or for committing a minor infraction; and

WHEREAS, Teamster members live and work in these communities. The senseless deaths of so many others compel questioning of whether equal justice under the law is possible for African Americans and people of color. These deaths are indicative of a growing racial division that threatens the current and future well-being of our country, our union, and our communities we live in; and

WHEREAS, there is a “widening gap of trust” between law enforcement and the African American community and communities of color; and closing this “widening gap of trust” requires that we address the underlying inequities that continue to divide people in this country along racial lines; and while we recognize that there have been some strides made within police departments across the nation to engage in constructive dialogue and good faith efforts to improve relations among police officers and African Americans, there is still a long road ahead; and

WHEREAS, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, represents well over 30,000 law enforcement officers who serve to protect our members, their families and our communities, we understand that police officers who are racist or have bad intentions are the minority; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for effective policies that will restore confidence in police, and bring hope to those families and communities devastated by these egregious acts of violence.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters supports laws and policies which prohibit biased policing, promote reform, require better training of law enforcement, funding for law enforcement in upholding Fourth Amendment rights and prohibiting unreasonable search and seizures.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters supports increasing the dialogue between the police and community, and allowing communities to have more influence in how they are policed, along with community meetings, community policing, peaceful demonstrations, and other actions seeking justice.

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters calls for the creation and dissemination of a national model for policing in communities of color that will end institutionalized racism; and the creation of a committee that will educate and advocate for police reform and accountability.