

Learning about Legislation #55 - Rep. Ayanna Pressley's resolution to condemn police brutality

[H. Res. 988](#): Condemning all acts of police brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive and militarized force throughout the country

In last week's MoCTrack, we provided what little information we had about Rep Ayanna Pressley's resolution, based on the recommendation of Indivisible National and the strength of the press release describing its contents. Now that the text is available, having been processed by the clerk's office in the House of Representatives, we are even more excited about its contents.

All resolutions are constructed in the same manner, with a series of "whereas" statements, laying out pieces of evidence or detailing events; followed by conclusions of the House or actions recommended by the Congress.

There "whereas" section of Rep. Pressley's resolution outlines:

- That "police brutality and the use of excessive and militarized force are among the most serious ongoing human rights and civil liberties violations in the United States and have led to community destabilization, a decrease in public safety, and the exacerbation of structural inequities"
- That "the system of policing in America, and its systemic targeting of and use of deadly and brutal force against people of color, particularly Black people, stems from the long legacy of slavery, lynching, Jim Crow laws, and the War on Drugs in the United States and has been perpetuated by violent and harmful law enforcement practices"
- Connections between "increased militarization of a police department and corresponding levels of police brutality"
- That "Black people, including Black women and girls, Native Americans, and Latinos are killed by police at disproportionately higher rates than their White peers" and "people with disabilities and other historically marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and those experiencing homelessness are significantly more likely to be criminalized and targets of police violence"

The resolution then has three "whereas" statement that need to be quoted in full:

- Whereas the House of Representatives finds that the conduct of police officers who engage in racial profiling and excessive force, which can include shootings, brutal beatings, fatal chokings, and any other excessive treatment is a violation of the Constitution of the United States;
- Whereas the House of Representatives finds that the rule of law in the United States is undermined when police officers engage in conduct inconsistent with the Constitution of the United States; and
- Whereas **the House of Representatives has a moral and constitutional obligation to protect the civil rights and liberties of all people from police abuses**

Then the resolution moves to the portion where the House of Representatives announces what steps they are resolved to address if the measure is passed. Those are:

1. The House "condemns all acts of brutality, racial profiling, and the use of excessive force by law enforcement officers and calls for the end of militarized policing practices"
2. The House supports strengthening laws, rules and procedures that would eliminate brutality, profiling and excessive force, including calling on the Department of Justice to "reinstate its role in investigating individual instances of police brutality, violence, and racial profiling, and police departments that violate civil rights;" and "filing briefs urging courts to reconsider decisions that permit unreasonable and excessive police practices and establish meaningful oversight of consent decrees"
3. The House supports the establishment of all-civilian review boards "with the authority to effectively investigate incidents of police misconduct... and discipline of police officers"
4. The House "calls for the adoption of sound and unbiased law enforcement policies at all levels of government that reduce the disparate impact of police brutality and use of force on Black and Brown people and other historically marginalized communities."