

limitation of any data collection system. The fact is, systematic racism law enforcement has gone unchecked for too long. The time for accountability is now. It is long overdue.

Let me say, finally, for most of my professional career, I have helped to enforce the laws. I have been a trial lawyer, yes, but I also served as the chief Federal prosecutor—the U.S. attorney—for Connecticut for 4½ years and then as attorney general of my State for 20. I have seen some of the best in law enforcement and some of the worst.

We need a higher standard, not just in words or paper but in fact. We need a standard that is worthy of the people who have marched and cried for justice throughout American history, who have tried to dream of a better system and a fairer country. There is so much work for us to do. At this moment, we must seize the opportunity, a point of consensus, to come together and act in a way that is worthy of this great Nation. We have proposed exactly that action in the Justice in Policing Act. We should be moving forward on it now, not on a bill that is truly unacceptably weak and inadequate and unworthy of this historic moment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

THE JUSTICE ACT

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. President. Thousands of Americans are protesting in communities across our country demanding that our country be better. The protests are an expression of grief for Ms. Taylor and Mr. Floyd and Mr. Arbery and Mr. Brooks and so many other Black Americans murdered by the people who are supposed to protect them. They are an expression of frustration and anger. It is 2020. It is the year 2020, a century and a half after the official end of slavery, five and a half decades after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, and still Black Americans are fighting the same fight. They are also an expression of hope against racism. We demand that our country do better. Demanding that we live up to our founding ideals is one of the most patriotic things anyone can do.

We need to listen to the Black voices leading these calls for justice and take real action. That is what Democrats want to do, and my colleagues Senator HARRIS and Senator BOOKER and the Congressional Black Caucus in the House have led bicameral efforts and have a serious plan, the Justice in Policing Act. Everybody knows it is a serious plan—everybody. It would implement real, meaningful reform. It would actually hold police accountable. It makes clear: no more choke holds, no more unchecked police misconduct, no more militarization of police.

Of course, we know this isn't the only thing we need to do. Policing didn't create institutional racism; it is a product of it and often reinforces it. We have a lot of work to do beyond this,

but these reforms are an important start to making policing in our country more just.

The Justice in Policing Act would create real change in our justice system, and communities across the country can't afford for us to not act on this meaningful legislation. What we cannot do is pass something just called police reform that does so little to actually reform policing and then turn around and tell Black mothers and fathers whose children who have been slain: See, we solved it. Our work here is done.

I respect Senator SCOTT, and I appreciate his coming to the table and taking on this issue. I know he is fighting an uphill battle with his own caucus. I know that. So many on his side of the aisle don't want to do anything, but they think they need to check the box.

I want to work with Senator SCOTT and with anyone of either party on real solutions. All of us on our side do. But I am not willing to participate in a political charade to vote on something that has no chance to lead to real change. It just checks a box and provides politicians with a talking point. It is an insult to Black families who have been fed empty promise after empty promise, year after year, decade after decade, generation after generation.

We need to listen to the communities that suffer the most at the hands of police violence. They all agree that the Senate Republican bill is simply not serious. It will not fix the problems. We will be right back here sooner rather than later. Virtually every major civil rights group opposes this bill: the NAACP Legal Defense Fund; the Urban League; the Young Women's Christian Association, one of the most important civil rights and women's rights organizations in the country.

It doesn't ban no-knock warrants; the Justice in Policing Act does. It doesn't stop the militarization of police departments; the Justice in Policing Act does. It doesn't create a national misconduct registry; the Justice in Policing Act does. It doesn't ban choke holds; the Justice in Policing Act does. These are all steps that civil rights groups have said are critical to any reform effort. It is the bare minimum.

All this bill offers is more studies of questions we already know the answers to. We don't need more studies. We don't need more task forces. We don't need, as Senator MCCONNELL specializes in, more delaying tactics. We need accountability. The JUSTICE Act even puts us in danger of moving in the opposite direction by providing more funding for policing without adequate rules and regulations and without a similar investment in community support.

The NAACP says this bill "ignores the public demands to reimagine public safety by shrinking the purview of law enforcement and providing better funding to agencies equipped to address the

critical needs of communities such as social services, mental health services, and education."

The Urban League says this Scott bill "dances around the edges in a show of political posturing."

We refuse to engage in that political posturing. We refuse to act like it is just a box we check and then we can move on. We refuse to insult Black Americans by pretending—pretending—this is a serious effort. People have suffered too long for that.

We have been here before. This isn't the first wave of protests or the second. In 2014, after the murders of Tamir Rice in my city of Cleveland and Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO, President Obama's legislation laid important groundwork for reform. They studied what reforms would be most effective. They instituted consent decrees with cities to hold departments accountable, and they created a roadmap we could follow. But President Trump undid much of the progress the Obama administration made.

The Urban League put out a plan for reform around the time of the murder of Tamir Rice after Michael Brown's murder in 2014. Since then, nearly 1,300 Black men and women—think of that—more than 1,300 Black men and women have been fatally shot by the police since the deaths of Michael Brown and Tamir Rice 6 years ago. This bill does nothing to stop the practices that killed them.

Black Americans know their lives are put in danger by police every day. We must listen to them. People all around the country—Black and White and Brown, in small towns and big cities, young and old—are listening, waking up, and joining the calls for change. The peaceful demonstrations and protests all over my State in Black and White neighborhoods and integrated communities and small towns and rural Ohio, in big cities, in suburbs everywhere—let's follow their lead. Let's actually hear the voices that have been silenced for too long.

I urge my colleagues to vote no and, instead, to work with us on real, meaningful reform to transform our public safety system into one that actually keeps people safe.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to address the nationwide call for reasonable, sensible police reforms. Last month, the American people watched in horror as a police officer knelt down on the neck of George Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds, killing him.

"I can't breathe." It was a slow execution caught on video, a metaphor for the systematic racism and injustices Black and Brown communities endure every day. But unlike other horrific videos of police killings that have sparked protests, this feels different. This is a moment when people of all races and walks of life have taken to

the streets in cities and communities across the country. They are crying out: Enough is enough.

It is time for us to address the institutional racism, economic, societal, and environmental inequities and injustice that have plagued this Nation since its founding. The American people are demanding real, meaningful change—bold, comprehensive action that starts by reforming our police system that has historically dealt a heavier hand toward communities of color.

What did the Republican majority do to answer the public's plea? They have offered the American people the JUSTICE Act. They call it justice, but justice for whom? This bill fails to meet this moment in history before us. It offers only lip service to the families of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and Tamir Rice and Eric Garner and all of those tragically lost at the hands of the police.

The Republican JUSTICE Act is nothing more than a glorified suggestion box filled with half measures and placations that sound good on paper but simply will not deliver the real change the American people are demanding from this body. There is no justice in the JUSTICE Act; rather, it is a wholly inadequate response to the injustices faced by Black and Brown communities at the hands of the police. It merely asks, suggests, recommends, and encourages. It says to law enforcement: Hey, would you mind? Could you kindly? Do you think you might be able?

Nowhere in this bill does it compel, require, mandate, or insist upon the commonsense structural reforms the American people are demanding. The JUSTICE Act calls for reports and a commission, but we have had 400 years to study the stain of slavery and institutional racism in this country. We don't need a study to tell us that too many young Black men are dying at the hands of the police or that you are more likely to be shot and killed by the police if you are Black than White. A commission will not save the life of the next George Floyd.

My Republican colleagues may think that the American people will praise them for passing an empty bill named "JUSTICE" that does no justice to the deep-seated, systemic failures in our policing system. They are mistaken.

Indeed, I would encourage my Republican colleagues to consider the Justice in Policing Act, led by Senators BOOKER and HARRIS, which I am proud to cosponsor. It requires a comprehensive set of reforms designed to increase police accountability, improve transparency, and invest in training. The Justice in Policing Act bans no-knock warrants in drug cases, the kind that led to Breonna Taylor's death. It establishes a national public registry on police misconduct so that the bad actors who make it harder for the good cops to do their jobs can't just move from department to department. Our bill requires data collection and publication

on the use of force. The Republican bill does none of those things. While the Justice in Policing Act bans deadly choke holds and other tactics that restrict blood flow to the brain, the Republican bill stops short of any such ban.

The JUSTICE Act is also silent on racial profiling and the militarization of local police departments. It is silent on funding independent investigative channels to prosecute police misconduct and fails to strengthen pattern and practice investigations. It fails to establish national standards for police misconduct. While it would provide additional money to law enforcement, it does so without actually requiring any substantive change, so it fails us. The JUSTICE Act fails to create a system of policing that is about community safety and equal application of the law.

So, again, I ask my friends on the other side of the aisle: Where is the actual justice? Where is the justice for Breonna Taylor, George Floyd? Where is the justice for those murders that were not captured on video? Where is the justice for thousands of Black men sitting in prison, victims of over-policing and racial profiling?

Senator MCCONNELL would have us think that the JUSTICE Act is our only option, that if we don't acquiesce to these half measures, then we don't really want reform. That is simply not true.

It seems to me that the Republicans and the President don't want real reform. They want window dressing and fresh paint instead of fixing the very foundation on which our policing system stands. They want to say that they did something without actually doing anything meaningful. They want to blame Democrats for holding out for real justice and refusing to play these political games with people's lives.

The House is going to pass the Justice in Policing Act on Thursday. I urge Senator MCCONNELL to take up that bill so that we can have the meaningful conversation on police reform our constituents and the Nation are demanding.

We know that reform can work. Camden, NJ, offers us concrete evidence about what we can accomplish when we get serious about making real changes. With one of the highest murder rates in the Nation, excessive force complaints were dramatically reduced, both in terms of homicides and excessive force issues.

So before I close, let me make perfectly clear the profound respect that I have for the men and women in law enforcement. Policing is a very tough job, and the vast majority of officers go out and perform their jobs every day with dignity and professionalism and care for the people in the communities in which they serve. I am deeply grateful for their service throughout the State of New Jersey and, indeed, throughout the Nation. These officers, who do their jobs with dignity and respect for the people they serve, share our demands

for real change. In fact, in Camden itself, a White chief of police joined with hundreds of protesters who were marching for change.

Across the country, tens of thousands of Americans did not brave a pandemic and endure being shot at with rubber bullets and tear gas just so that Congress could create another commission and mandate another report. They demand that their elected officials in Washington meet this moment in history and actually do something that lives up to the American promise of a nation where every man and woman, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, or orientation, is treated equally—equally under the law.

I will just close by saying that the Nation will rue the day it answered the call for reform with business as usual. There will be a rude awakening. Who among us—who among us, if this were our daily experience, would be satisfied with the counsels of patience and delay? Who among us?

The American people are calling for real justice. We should listen. We should act, and we should deliver real justice.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROTESTS

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, Mr. Floyd's horrific murder at the hands of a man sworn to uphold the law, our Nation has seen justified anger. As I said here 2 weeks ago, it is a moment that calls for not just police reform, it calls for a full reckoning with racial inequities that still plague our Nation.

There is, in my mind, nothing more un-American than racial discrimination. Our Nation was founded on the revolutionary truth that every human being is created equal and that our rights do not come from our government or from our leaders or even our laws; our rights come from our Creator.

It is true that the man who authored these words and gave birth to the young Nation did not fully live up to these principles, but it is also true that every single great fight for equality in this country's history has come from a direct appeal to those powerful principles. Slavery, segregation, discriminatory impediments to voting—all of these came to an end, not from efforts to overthrow our values but from demands that we fulfill them, for these evils could not exist in a country, in a nation, built upon the idea that all people are created equal with rights granted to them by God.

Slavery and racial discrimination are, indeed, a tragic part of our history, but the long and the steady and