



Reform, Shift + Build Act *An Act to Reform Police Standards and Shift Resources to Build a More Equitable, Fair and Just Commonwealth that Values Black Lives and Communities of Color*

Fact Sheet ❖ July 2020

In late spring 2020, people across the country took to the streets to honor and mourn the lives of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and too many other Black people killed by law enforcement and racist violence, and to demand immediate change and reform.



In response to resounding calls for justice, the Senate's *An Act to Reform Police Standards and Shift Resources to Build a More Equitable, Fair and Just Commonwealth that Values Black Lives and Communities of Color*—the ***Reform, Shift + Build Act***—promotes a number of reforms to, among other things, ban aggressive police tactics, significantly raise standards and accountability in law enforcement, and begin to reprioritize public safety resources throughout the Commonwealth.

Reform

The ***Reform, Shift + Build Act*** **strengthens use of force standards and limits qualified immunity** for all law enforcement agents by: banning chokeholds; banning other deadly uses of force except in cases of imminent harm; requiring the use of de-escalation tactics; creating a duty to intervene for officers who witness abuse of force; and allowing police officers to be held civilly liable for excessive use of force. The bill will also expand and strengthen police training in de-escalation, racism and intervention tactics.

It also **creates a Police Officer Standards and Accreditation Committee (POSAC)**—an independent state entity composed of law enforcement professionals, community members, and racial justice advocates—to standardize the certification, training, and decertification of police officers.

The commission will have independent power to investigate misconduct. Certain offenses will result in mandatory and permanent decertification of an officer. The bill will also form a separate commission to recommend a certification, training, and decertification framework for correctional officers.

The bill also **includes reforms to the state police**, including allowing the Governor to select a colonel from outside the force and giving the colonel great ability to apply discipline. To increase diversity in the workforce, the bill creates a state police cadet program. The bill further **bans the use of facial surveillance technology** while a commission studies the use of such technology and makes recommendations to the legislature that will ensure accuracy as well as privacy and due process protections. The bill also **creates a task force to study and make recommendations for the use of body and dashboard cameras** by law enforcement agencies.

Shift

The *Reform, Shift + Build Act* redirects funding away from policing and corrections towards **community investment** through the establishment of, and dedicated funding streams for, the Strong Communities and Justice Reinvestment Workforce Development Fund. Controlled by community members and community development professionals, the fund will make competitive grants to drive economic opportunities in communities most impacted by excessive policing and mass incarceration. The fund will receive damages from police overtime fraud cases and savings generated from reduced incarcerated populations.

To shift the balance of law enforcement techniques from force and punishment to de-escalation and community-centered responses, the bill seeks to **demilitarize the police force** by requiring transparency and civilian authorization for military equipment acquisitions. It also seeks to **expand community-based, non-police solutions to crisis response and jail diversion** by developing new evidence-based intervention models.

The bill also seeks to reduce the school-to-prison pipeline by **promoting student safety and well-being over criminalization** by ending the requirement that school districts employ School Resource Officers. It also prohibits school districts from sharing students' personal information with police departments for gang databases. Further, the bill **expands access to record expungement for young people** by allowing individuals with more than one charge on their juvenile record to qualify for expungement.

Build

Finally, the *Reform, Shift + Build Act* strives to **build a more equitable, fair and just system by beginning to dismantle systemic racism**. The bill seeks to **address the racial disparities in policing** by banning racial profiling in law enforcement and requiring data collection to improve police practices. The bill specifically requires law enforcement agents to document each car or pedestrian stop and search. The data, and subsequent analysis, will be available to the public.

Along with **introducing a police training requirement on the history of slavery, lynching and racism**, the bill **creates a permanent commission on the status of African Americans**. This commission will, among other things, advise the legislature and executive agencies on policies and practices that will ensure equity for and address the impact of discrimination against African Americans.