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July 17, 2020

The Hon. Aaron Michlewitz, Chair  
The Hon. Claire Cronin, Chair  
House Committee on Ways & Means  
Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
State House, Rooms 243 & 136  
Boston MA, 02133

Dear Chairs Michlewitz and Cronin,

As the Executive Director of Boston Prep, a charter public school that serves 655 students and 375 alumni from the City of Boston, I am writing to ask that you pass legislation before the end of the session to address issues of systemic racism in law enforcement that includes the 10-point plan released by the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative caucus and reform of qualified immunity for police.

Boston Prep's student body reflects the neighborhoods in which our students reside – primarily Dorchester, Mattapan, Hyde Park, and Roxbury. Nearly all of our students are youth of color, with 67% identifying as Black, 27% as Latinx, and 4% as multiracial or other. Boston Prep's mission is to prepare students to succeed in four-year colleges and embody, in thought and action, lifelong ethical growth. We believe firmly that education is a powerful tool to advance racial equity. However, we know that it is not enough; as a society, we must act with conviction to dismantle systemic racism in all forms, across all of our institutions, policies, and laws. Until we do so, our students and families will never be truly free to achieve their dreams.

Specifically, we kindly ask that the following proposals be included in any police reform legislation taken up by the House:

- Eliminate barriers to accountability by limiting “qualified immunity” for police officers.
- Create a statewide process for certifying police officers and de-certifying police officers for misconduct and abuse.
- Impose statutory limits on the use of force, including a ban on chokeholds and other tactics known to have deadly consequences.
- Increase data collection and reporting on race regarding arrests and police use of force by every department.
- Establish a commission on structural racism to study how the presence of institutional racism and culture of structural racial inequality impacts communities of color, especially as it relates to contact with the criminal justice system.
- Limit the presence of police officers in schools.
- Additional reforms that would seek to increase accountability, limit the potential for police brutality, and dismantle systemic racism in our law enforcement community.

We urge the Committee to act swiftly to adopt a comprehensive bill that encompasses all of these provisions as soon as possible. Thank you, as always, for your leadership.

Sincerely,

Sharon Liszanckie  
Executive Director, Boston Prep