



**Testimony in support of S.2820**  
**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**  
**Submitted to the House Committee on Ways and Means**  
**in cooperation with the Joint Committee on the Judiciary**  
**By Jennifer Muroff and Tracy Brown, LWVMA Legislative Specialists**  
**July 17, 2020**

The League of Women Voters advocates within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism. Black, Indigenous and all people of color (BIPOC) deserve equal protection under the law. LWV advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, for preventing excessive force and brutality by law enforcement.

We support S.2820 and want to ensure that it is strengthened and not weakened by amendments. We urge you to include all of the aggressive and necessary measures outlined in the following two House bills:

**HD.5128, An Act Relative to Saving Black Lives and Transforming Public Safety**, Rep. Liz Miranda, which bans chokeholds, no knock warrants, tear gas, and hiring abusive officers; creates a duty to intervene and to de-escalate and requires maintaining public records of officer misconduct.

**HB.3277 An Act to Secure Civil Rights through the Courts of the Commonwealth**, Rep. Michael Day, which ends the practice of qualified immunity.

LWV joins civil rights organizations calling on government to implement needed policing reforms. We urge leadership to swiftly rectify the legacy of white supremacy and anti-black racism that has led to police violence against Black people across our Commonwealth and to rectify these structural wrongs through legislation before another Black life is needlessly lost. This includes an end to the qualified immunity doctrine which prevents police from being held legally accountable when they break the law.

LWV is a democracy and voting rights organization and we support legislation and policy reforms focused on creating systemic change in our government institutions, starting with unjust policing. We are working to inform voters and hold government accountable on the local and state level as that is where the real potential for change exists.

The LWVMA, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, believes that all levels of government have the responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing, for all persons in the United States regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability.