



July 16, 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 the organization representing 74 of Massachusetts' charter public schools, 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.

Massachusetts' charter public schools serve approximately 5% of all of the Commonwealth's public school students, but 15% of the state's Black public school students. Our collective mission is to ensure that all students, especially historically underserved students, have access to a high-quality public education. And the truth is that while striving to deliver on the promise of educational equity is vitally important, unfortunately, it is not enough. Every day we are reminded that no matter what our Black students achieve in their lives, until we as a society are successful in fundamentally transforming our institutions, policies, and laws, our Black students' minds, self-worth, and bodies will continually be subjected to harm.

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.

Putting forward legislation that supports the 10-point plan released by the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative caucus, and which also includes language limiting qualified immunity for police officers, would represent a critical first step in eliminating barriers to accountability. As it relates to language limiting qualified immunity specifically, it would also help restore the ability of all of our state's citizens to obtain relief when police officers violate their legal and constitutionally secured rights.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Nicolette". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Tim Nicolette
Executive Director, Massachusetts Charter Public School Association