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FJP Statement on President Biden’s Executive Order to Advance Effective, Accountable Policing and Strengthen Public Safety

[Fair and Just Prosecution](#) Executive Director Miriam Krinsky issued the following statement in response to President Joe Biden’s [executive order](#), issued today, outlining actions aimed to improve our nation’s approach to policing and public safety:

“Today, we mark the two year anniversary since George Floyd was brutally and unnecessarily murdered at the hands of law enforcement, sparking a nationwide reckoning with the racial injustices that plague our criminal legal system. Yet, in the ensuing years, too little has changed and at least [2,230 people](#) have been killed by the police since George Floyd’s murder. We must honor his life – and the lives of so many others lost to police violence – by implementing the meaningful and lasting [structural reforms](#) that communities want and need.

Today, President Biden took a first step towards those systemic changes through an executive order aimed at increasing transparency, accountability and oversight in policing. We applaud this action; reforms such as these are integral to public safety by fortifying trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. But bold transformative changes at a larger scale will be needed to achieve a justice system that truly lives up to that name.

President Biden’s order includes important strategies to tangibly improve policing at the federal level, including creating a national law enforcement misconduct database; implementing use of force standards that prioritize de-escalation, an affirmative duty to intervene and a duty to render medical aid; promoting co-responder and alternative responder models; mandating adoption of body-worn camera policies that include expedited public release of footage following particularly concerning incidents; restricting the transfer of military equipment to law enforcement agencies; and promoting hiring processes that result in a more inclusive and diverse law enforcement workforce. The President also directed federal agencies to promote alternatives to incarceration and reentry strategies, begin to address conditions of confinement in federal prisons and fully implement the FIRST STEP Act.

These are all important elements of reforming policing, but [more can and should be done](#). The executive order fails to fully advance critical national uniform use of force standards, including the use of deadly force *only* as a last resort, when absolutely necessary, and in response to an immediate threat of serious physical harm or death. And more must be done to incentivize and promote policing reforms and best practices at the local level. We

also encourage the Biden-Harris administration to use its authority to achieve impactful, and much needed, reforms to the broader criminal legal system such as: supporting [harm reduction](#) strategies – rather than punitive responses – to address substance use disorder; exercising clemency authority and expanding [sentencing review mechanisms](#) to return to the community individuals behind bars who pose no danger; [ending our nation’s troubled death penalty](#); and incentivizing and [supporting](#) state and local criminal justice reforms that are being modeled by some elected local prosecutors.

We need bold leadership to bring the fundamental and lasting change to our criminal legal system that communities are crying out for and deserve. We hope this is just the beginning of concrete action by President Biden and his administration to promote and protect justice for all.”

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Fair and Just Prosecution is a national network of elected prosecutors working towards common-sense, compassionate criminal justice reforms. To learn more about FJP’s work, visit our [website](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#).