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Mayor's Office

Mayor William Peduto Releases Police Reform Agenda

PITTSBURGH, PA (June 4, 2020) Mayor William Peduto today outlined his agenda for police reform.

The Mayor renewed his previous endorsement of use-of-force legislation introduced by state Representatives Summer Lee and Ed Gainey barring police from using deadly force during arrests, and using it only to protect against imminent threats of harm.

The Mayor also fully endorsed the State Legislature Police Reform Working Group's slate of recommendations. The Working Group [has issued a list](#) of other possible reforms, including outlawing the use of choke-holds, establishing an independent review process of any police encounter that results in serious injury or death, and naming an inspector general to systematically review police policies and behaviors to preemptively prevent police misconduct.

Additionally, Mayor Peduto is calling on Pittsburgh Police and all police statewide to be required to go through annual implicit bias and de-escalation training. This is training Pittsburgh Police already receive but will be receiving more regularly.

Furthermore, the Mayor highlighted additional needed Harrisburg reforms that have challenged local government's ability to create greater accountability and transparency.

Currently under Pennsylvania law, city leaders can fire or otherwise discipline police officers for misbehavior only to have the discipline overturned by arbitrators, and officers can only be de-certified for misconduct if they are found guilty of criminal charges.

Further reforms could include:

- Amending Act 111 to limit the scope of bargaining over disciplinary procedures or specifically limit a labor arbitrator's authority to modify disciplinary penalties
- Amending Act 111 to adopt the "public policy exception," which would enable cities to challenge an arbitrator's decision to return an officer to work on the basis that their continued employment is adverse to the public interest
- Amending the Confidence in Law Enforcement Act to expand the circumstances under which employers are required to terminate officers engaged in misconduct
- Giving the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training

Commission (MPOETC) more authority to revoke certifications from officers, or the ability to review use-of-force complaints to suspend or revoke certifications

Change always must begin at home. The City is fully endorsing the “8 Can’t Wait” campaign (many of which the City has already implemented) and has already begun to review policies to make sure that Pittsburgh:

- Requires officers to de-escalate situations, when possible, before using force.
- Have a Force Continuum or Matrix included in their use of force policy, defining the types of force/weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance.
- Explicitly prohibit chokeholds and strangleholds (including carotid restraints) or limit these tactics to situations where deadly force is authorized.
- Requires officers to give a verbal warning, when possible, before using deadly force.
- Prohibits officers from shooting at people in moving vehicles unless the person poses a deadly threat by means other than the vehicle (for example, shooting at people from the vehicle).
- Requires officers to exhaust all other reasonable alternatives before resorting to using deadly force.
- Requires officers to intervene to stop another officer from using excessive force.
- Requires officers to report all uses of force including threatening another civilian with a firearm.

Additionally, the Mayor has signed [President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Alliance Pledge](#) to:

1. REVIEW the police use of force policies in my community
2. ENGAGE my community by including a diverse range of input, experiences, and stories in our review
3. REPORT the findings of our review to my community and seek feedback within 90 days of signing this pledge
4. REFORM my community’s police use of force policies based on findings

Lastly, in line with growing research around the issue of "compassion fatigue" in law enforcement, the City will begin exploring the mandatory rotating of staff work assignments that could help to lessen the impact of long-term, high-stress assignments.

“These are critical steps we must take and we must take now. We must work to build trust between police and all they serve. We must undo the systems that have caused pain, suffering, and loss of life in communities of color. This is a first step, we must strive everyday to do better,” Mayor Peduto said.