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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Bipartisan Police Reform Bill Passes Florida Legislature**

**Tallahassee, FL** –Today, [HB 7051](#) passed on the Senate floor. It received zero “no” votes on the House and Senate floor on its way to Governor DeSantis’ desk.

The Florida Legislative Black Caucus identified this as a priority back in the summer, following the protests in reaction to the murder of George Floyd by Derek Chauvin on the street in Minneapolis.

This legislation is the result of extensive collaboration between the Florida Legislative Black Caucus and House Leadership. It includes a collection of bipartisan ideas to make common-sense changes to policing in Florida. These provisions will make policing better and safer for our communities and officers.

Some of the key provisions include: prohibiting the arrest of children under the age of 7 unless for a forcible felony, data collection on use of force incidents, making it harder for problematic officers to change jobs undetected, and establishing a clear duty to interfere when fellow officers are using excessive force.

**Leader Bobby DuBose (D- Fort Lauderdale):** “Both parties came together to put forth this legislation to make policing better in Florida. It will safeguard and support good law enforcement officers while protecting vulnerable Floridians. I’m proud of the hard work Representative Driskell and the rest of the Black Caucus has done to turn these ideas into law.”

**Representative Fentrice Driskell (D- Tampa):** “Americans across the country have been calling for police reform. The murder of George Floyd has been a galvanizing incident, bringing much-needed attention to this crisis. These changes will make policing better and safer for both our communities and officers. This legislation stands in stark contrast to the dangerous anti-protest bill that Governor DeSantis signed into law recently. It represents what can happen when we legislate with everyone’s best interests in mind. This bill is just the beginning and we will continue fighting for fair and just policing in Florida.”

**Senator Bobby Powell (D- West Palm Beach):** “In the ongoing battle for fair and just policing, too often the solution to many systemic problems has been to

excessively punish individual wrongdoers. The way to address systemic problems is to implement systemic solutions and HB7051 is a giant step towards combating deeply rooted and long ignored issues within law enforcement.”

**Senator Randolph Bracy (D- Orlando):** “Our faith in those sworn to protect us has been shaken. Police brutality and overaggressive policing will only deepen the mistrust in black communities. This police reform package starts to build back trust, block by block. This is one block.”

**Senator Audrey Gibson (D- Jacksonville):** “The bill is a start towards reform. Establishing at least some measure of uniformity in law enforcement training standards helps to ensure that tragic incidents are minimized and justice, in the execution of the duty to serve and protect.”

**Senator Shevrin Jones (D- Miami Gardens):** "Every Floridian, regardless of zip code, wants and deserves safe communities. Making that a reality calls for us to rebuild public trust through greater accountability, transparency, and accessibility, and these reforms are important steps towards safer, fairer communities."

**Representative Kevin Chambliss (D- Homestead):** “This Common Sense Police Reform Bill represents a unified, bipartisan approach that protects and supports both our law enforcement community and the citizens they are sworn to protect. While this is just a start, it is good public policy and I am proud to be a part of the effort that passes this Bill into Law.”

**Representative Dianne Hart (D- Tampa):** “I’m happy to see this step taken to better our Criminal Justice System. It is my hope that this starts a much needed conversation about how we deal with the use of force in the state of Florida.”

**Representative Yvonne Hinson (D- Gainesville):** “Bad cops make good cops look bad. Time to crack the blue wall of silence, create a registry, eliminate immunity and criminalize use of deadly force.”

**Representative Dotie Joseph (D- Miami):** “In a time where our communities are hurting--from incessant incidents of police brutality, rare verdicts holding aggressors accountable, and very visible videos documenting colossal failures to de-escalate or treat people with dignity--I am grateful that we were able to reach bipartisan bill that incorporates some of the pain and purity of the #BlackLivesMatter movement as well as the frustrations of honorable officers wanting to set a better standard statewide. HB 7051 incorporates three of my bills--mandatory excessive force data reporting, a duty to intervene, and a duty to render medical aid--and several other concepts, which are the work product of a community collaboration by various Black bar associations, law enforcement, and community groups in South Florida.”

**Representative Travaris McCurdy (D- Orlando):** “The people of Florida should know that while this is moving us in the right direction we should not be stranded. Stranded at this point in the reforming of our criminal justice system. We must continue to work to improve and reform the system until it is equally and fully applied no matter where you live or what you look like.”

**Representative Anika Omphroy (D- Sunrise):** “I introduced HB577 which focused on creating a tracking system for the excessive use of force in all law enforcement agencies. This was added into HB 7051 codifying it into Florida law. With this data, we will be able to monitor and resolve these occurrences to balance public safety and ensure all Floridians are treated the same under the law.”

**Representative Felicia Robinson (D- Miami Gardens):** “The passage of HB 7051 is a significant first step on the journey to reformation, transformation, and healing within our Criminal Justice System. This bill is the product of much discussion and debate on both sides of the aisle and I applaud my 119 colleagues, for their continuous effort on this historic piece of legislation.”

**Representative Geraldine Thompson (D- Windermere):** “A database, which I championed and is included in House Bill 7051, will allow us to identify problems with the use of force by law enforcement officers. This will allow intervention before there is a loss of life or grave bodily injury to a person.”

**Representative Patricia Williams (D- Pompano Beach):** “I am honored that my bill, the Kaia Rolle Act, which will establish a minimum age of arrest in Florida, was incorporated into House Bill 7051. History will record the decisions that we make today. These decisions will affect the lives of our children and grandchildren for years to come. Now is the time to get it right! This is just a start, I may not be here to see the change to its entirety, but I know a change is going to come”

**Representative Marie Woodson (D- Hollywood):** “Things may not go the way we expect in the beginning but the introduction of change big or small shows the pathway to a better tomorrow for all there's never a wrong time to do what's right.”

**Representative Tracie Davis (D – Jacksonville):** “As we work toward real police reform in Florida, things such as limiting choke holds, increased standard basic recruit training, and prohibiting a child from a certain age from being arrested is a great step towards police reform with the implementation of HB 7051.”

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