

**From:** [Peel, Jackson](#)  
**To:** [Press](#)  
**Subject:** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Florida Legislative Black Caucus Members Release Diverse and Comprehensive Bill Package to Promote Fair and Just Policing Reforms  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 9, 2021 9:58:52 AM  
**Attachments:** [fair\\_and\\_just\\_policing.pdf](#)

---

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 9, 2021

### **CONTACT**

Raven Sansbury  
Office of Representative Fentrice Driskell  
[Raven.Sansbury@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:Raven.Sansbury@myfloridahouse.gov)  
(850) 717-5063

## **Florida Legislative Black Caucus Members Release Diverse and Comprehensive Bill Package to Promote Fair and Just Policing Reforms**

**Tallahassee, Fla.** – Members of the **Florida Legislative Black Caucus (FLBC)**, with support from the Florida House and Senate Democratic Caucus', released a sweeping and comprehensive police reform legislative package. In an effort to address public safety and the underlying fears and concerns that triggered civil protests across the state of Florida and the nation, FLBC members are offering a wide variety of bills to protect the safety of Floridians and support fair and just policing practices.

The package addresses a number of operational and civil issues that would benefit law enforcement agencies and civilians alike by strengthening transparency and accountability within the system. The FLBC intends to work with lawmakers on both sides of the isle to approach these reforms in a sensible, evidence-driven, and collaborative manner.

Additional fair and just policing reform legislation will be released in the coming weeks as the Florida Legislature prepares for what will be a momentous and busy 2021 Session. Members of FLBC continue to affirm their commitment to serve as the voice of communities that have long experienced the systemic inequities in policing, and as the bridge that can help remedy those inequities through meaningful policy change.

**Senator Bobby Powell (D-West Palm Beach)** offered the following statement: *"The Florida Legislative Black Caucus (FLBC) is interested in ensuring the safety, well-being and general welfare of all Florida communities. It is our hope that the proposed legislation will influence better practices that promote accountability, transparency and community relationships which will ultimately result in better community outcomes between law enforcement and the communities that they serve."*

**Senator Randolph Bracy (D-Orlando)** offered the following statement: *“Our faith in those sworn to protect us has been shaken, but not permanently broken. We all know good police officers exist in far greater numbers than bad ones. Yet most people are also starting to realize that tragic events like the death of George Floyd and others was not an isolated incident but a lived reality of black people in our country. Police brutality and overaggressive policing will only deepen the mistrust in black communities. The legislation I’ve proposed aims to restore that trust, collect better data, and does something about implicit bias in how police are trained and make reforms to use of force.”*

**Representative Fentrice Driskell (D-Tampa)** offered the following statement in support of the **Police Reform Omnibus Bill**: *“Floridians are currently in unprecedented times, and now more than ever, we need bold leaders willing to name and propose solutions to address our state’s varied history with systemic injustice. Since the rise of civil unrest as a response to yet another murder of a Black person by law enforcement, we’ve seen that our constituents are looking for solutions not just thoughts and prayers. This comprehensive legislative proposal examines and offers policy to improve law enforcement’s operations and relationship with the community.”*

FLBC’s new policy agenda addresses many facets of policing to support a more transparent and fair process, including, but not limited to:

### **Establishing Uniform Law Enforcement Agency Standards**

***SB 942 & HB 647 by Senator Audrey Gibson and Representative Tracie Davis.***

**Senator Audrey Gibson (D-Jacksonville)** offered the following statement in support of **SB 942**: *“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.”*

**Representative Tracie Davis (D-Jacksonville)** offered the following statement in support of **HB 647**: *“This legislation demands we focus our policing standards at the beginning of the process to prevent so many unintended consequences, as many of our policies are outdated and need to be revamped. It is evident that there is an insufficient amount of training as it relates to mental health, implicit bias, restraining techniques, cultural sensitivity, and cultural competence. These are just some of the issues that needed to change yesterday.”*

### **Reforming Qualified Immunity**

**SB 670 & HB 261 by Senator Shevrin Jones and Representative Michele Rayner:**

**Senator Shevrin Jones (D-Miami Gardens)** offered the following statement in support of **SB 670**: *“Qualified immunity creates a culture of permissive use of force by police, creates near-zero accountability for police misconduct, lowers community trust in police, and invites civil unrest.”*

**Limiting the Acquisition of Certain Military Equipment**

**SB 878 & HB 187 Senator Perry E. Thurston, Jr. and Representative Travaris McCurdy/Representative Angie Nixon:**

**Representative Travaris McCurdy (D-Orlando)** offered the following statement in support of **HB 187**: *“Research has shown that the militarization of local law enforcement through military grade weapons, armored vehicles, combat attire, and other items provided by the Department of Defense does not reduce crime. There is no need for law enforcement agencies to be outfitted like combat soldiers while they are tasked with protecting and serving our community. The most important thing for policy makers and the public to know is that you can’t justify giving surplus military equipment to police departments on the grounds it will lead to a reduction in crime. There is no evidence for that.”*

**Collecting Information Regarding Use of Force Incidents**

**SB 454 & HB 577 by Senator Randolph Bracy & Representative Anika Omphroy:**

**Representative Anika Omphroy (D- Sunrise)** offered the following statement in support of **HB 577**: *“As the Ranking Democratic Member on the Civil Justice Subcommittee, I came across the claims bill of Dontrell Stevens who was paralyzed from the waist down due to excessive use of force at the age of 19. We all witnessed the tragic murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota last year. Recently, a video surfaced of an Osceola County deputy slamming a student down and knocking her unconscious. This tracking system needs to be codified into law in the State of Florida. With this data, we will be able to see the issues that must be resolved to balance public safety and ensure that all Floridians are treated the same under the law.”*

**Mandating Universal Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies**

**Representative Felicia Robinson (D-Miami Gardens)** offered the following statement in support of **HB 299**: *“Accreditation is nothing new for large agencies.*

*Other state agencies go through an accreditation as it allows for accountability and adds a layer of transparency. I see this as a good move for both the agencies and the people of Florida.”*

### **Establishing a Minimum Age of Arrest**

**Representative Patricia H. Williams (D-Ft. Lauderdale)** offered the following statement in support of **HB 303**: *“You’re supposed to protect us, but who’s going to protect us from you. Correctional facilities have now become collection facilities. When it comes to sentencing, a person’s income should not determine their outcome.”*

### **Reforming of Police Bill of Rights**

**Representative Omari Hardy (D- Palm Beach)** offered the following statement **HB 6057**: *“We say that our government is built on a system of checks and balances, but the Police Bill of Rights turns that idea upside down. Rather than balancing the awesome powers of the police with equally awesome mechanisms of oversight, the Police Bill of Rights codifies into law, a system of loopholes and technicalities that makes it nearly impossible to hold bad officers accountable. It rigs the law in favor of these bad officers. That’s why we have to repeal it.”*

### **Repealing Stand Your Ground**

**Representative Yvonne Hinson (D-Gainesville)** offered the following statement on **HB 6035**: *“To this day, the murder of Trayvon Martin at the hands of George Zimmerman haunts the African American community. We have seen throughout history various laws and legal principles enacted to preserve the status quo of white supremacy. Stand Your Ground is no different. It’s a long past time for Florida to go in a new direction.”*

### **Additional Fair and Just Policing Legislation**

**SB 442 & HB 739 filed by Senator Randolph Bracy and Representative Kristen Arrington (D - Osceola)**: Raises the rate of compensation for jurors and prohibits the use of peremptory challenges to strike prospective jurors in criminal jury trials.

**SB 868 & HB 521 by Senator Bobby Powell, Jr. & Representative Christopher Benjamin (D-Miami)**: Restricts the use of no-knock search warrants.

**SB 452 & HB 569 by Senator Randolph Bracy and Representative Kevin**

**Chambliss (D-Miami)** Establishes uniform standards for body and dashboard cameras.

**SB 480 & HB 277 by Senator Randolph Bracy and Representative Geraldine Thompson (D-Orlando):** Creates a police misconduct registry that tracks the history of law enforcement officers.

**HB 479 by Representative Ramon Alexander (D-Tallahassee):** Reforms compensation for victims of excessive use of force by law enforcement officers.

The FLBC is a nonpartisan organization that was established in 1964 upon the arrival of **Representative Joe Lang Kershaw**, the first Black legislator to serve in Florida since the Reconstruction Era. Today, FLBC consists of 27 members who serve in the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives. The caucus' unified goal is to serve and promote the common good and welfare of African Americans and advocate for policy changes that positively impact the Black community. For more information on FLBC, visit [FLBlackCaucus.com](http://FLBlackCaucus.com).

###