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Attorneys Ben Crump and Antonio Romanucci Representing the Family of George Floyd Offer Platform for Federal Police Reform

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Civil rights and personal injury attorneys Ben Crump of Ben Crump Law and Antonio Romanucci of Romanucci & Blandin, LLC, who represent the family of George Floyd, today announced a platform of reforms to create lasting police reform in America. The series of federal recommendations aim to increase the level of trust between police and citizens, especially Black citizens, who police officers have sworn to protect and serve. The urgent need for these national standards in policing was made profoundly clear in 2020 with a series of tragic and unjustified police misconduct cases caught on video, which sparked community outrage and set off a modern civil rights movement calling for change. In the platform, titled A Model Approach to Comprehensive Police Reform, Attorneys Crump and Romanucci detail specific steps to increase professionalism in policing, create greater accountability and transparency, and establish specifications for hiring and training practices to create national standards for law enforcement.

“We need to change how police see and treat Black citizens. Too many officers look at a Black person and assume they are criminal or dangerous. They use excessive force on Black people even when they are restrained, pose no threat and say they can’t breathe. This is a moment when lasting change is possible between police and people of color. We must act now,” said Attorney Ben Crump of Ben Crump Law.

“Together our country has lived through a very painful year, but it has been a valuable watershed, bringing to the surface longstanding abuses of power by some police officers. The collective outrage and call for change need to be heard and respected by those in a position to create progress. Our platform calls on federal lawmakers to finally step into this critical issue and create national standards and accountability to increase trust in our communities,” said Antonio M. Romanucci of Romanucci & Blandin, LLC.

Highly regarded police experts contributed to the reform recommendations: Geoff Alpert, expert in police training and culture and Scott DeFoe, expert in use of force by police.

In the United States, police violence is a leading cause of death of young Black men: On average, unarmed Blacks are 3.5 times more likely to be shot by police than are unarmed whites. This is not a new problem, but in 2020 Americans of all ages, races and ethnicities took to the streets by the tens of thousands to demand police reforms, greater accountability and transparency, and a transformation in the relationship between law enforcement agencies and the communities they serve.

A significant force in the emergence of this renewed social justice movement is the omnipresence of video. The advent of body cams and dash cams for police and video cameras in the hands of most citizens has provided damning and indisputable documentation of violent police actions toward Black Americans. These videos reveal a racist culture against Black men, where officers use overtly racist language and behavior and unreasonable and excessive force, often resulting in the graphic, gruesome, and unjustifiable deaths of Black citizens.

Civil justice movements have arisen in the past yet failed to produce lasting meaningful reform. Building trust between communities and police will require comprehensive change and a set of federal standards common to all law enforcement. The proposals are a blueprint for reforms that will yield greater transparency and accountability to improve the level of trust between citizens and the officers who are sworn to serve and protect them. Calls to defund the police have been misconstrued and twisted into an attack on Black Lives Matter, when, in fact, they were aimed to draw attention to the need to define a proper role for police and to fund appropriate training and reforms, leading to improved accountability, is essential.

For complete context and discussion the entire whitepaper, *A Model Approach to Comprehensive Police Reform*, can be found [here](#).

A companion video, which conveys the country's crisis in policing and urges reform, can be found [here](#).

A summary of the recommendations in the whitepaper is below:

1. Standardize and professionalize policing

We recommend the adoption of:

- National licensing standards to ensure consistency and a baseline of performance and measurements, as well as a process to decertify officers who are no longer fit for duty.
- Model policies and procedures to create a roadmap for law enforcement leaders.
- Development of a national police hiring exam that identifies suitable candidates on psychological, emotional, physical, and intellectual levels.
- Standard and consistent training to prepare and maintain officers fit for duty, keeping perishable job skills sharp with regular, interactive training modules.
- Enhanced mental health services for officers to prepare them for their duties and support them throughout their career

2. Enhance accountability and transparency

We recommend the adoption of:

- Creation of a National Police Accountability Oversight Task Force to set consistent standards and expectations.
- A mandatory permanent and public national database of officer misconduct, to provide transparency and consistency.
- Uniform reporting standards by agencies to generate reliable data and understand trends in policing.
- Uniform use of body-worn cameras and policies to provide documentation of citizen encounters with officers.
- Intentionally turning off a bodycam should be a federal obstruction of justice violation with a rebuttable presumption of guilt for officers who turn off a bodycam in a case involving a police shooting.
- A standard, independent investigatory process for impartial inquiries of officer misconduct allegations.
- Removal of qualified immunity protections to create full accountability and increase community trust.

3. Reframe the role of police with aim to preserve life

We recommend the adoption of:

- The demilitarization of policing to emphasize the sanctity and preservation of human life.
- A common curriculum in de-escalation.
- Continuous training in de-escalation techniques to provide an ongoing learning environment and to ensure that officers' skills and responses are appropriate and up-to-date.
- Additional mental health supports to ensure that appropriate resources and a humane approach are used with those in crisis.

A tumultuous 2020 exposed longstanding fissures in our society in the relationship between police and the communities they serve. The cases and circumstances that increased the public's consciousness can and should be used for the greater good and be a rally cry for meaningful and positive police reform. The whitepaper explains that the pillars of standardizing and professionalizing policing, creating greater accountability and transparency, and reframing the role of police to preserve life are essential to our progress and health as a nation. Change of this magnitude will require time, expertise, the investment of dollars and some difficult emotional and cultural work to come together and move forward to rebuild trust. Attorneys Crump and Romanucci acknowledge that hard work and the need for federal lawmakers to embrace the historic opportunity here, listening to public insistence for change while also having law enforcement leaders at the table to be fully engaged in the transformation. Attorneys Crump and Romanucci call for all of these stakeholders to hold the first of a series of roundtable discussions in the first quarter of 2021 to move this critical societal issue from momentum to meaningful reform.

About Ben Crump Law

Nationally renowned civil rights and personal injury attorney Ben Crump and his national network of specialized attorneys have spearheaded a legal movement to better protect the rights of marginalized citizens. He has led landscape-changing civil rights cases and represented clients in a wide range of areas including civil rights, personal injury, labor and employment, class actions, and more. Ben Crump Law is dedicated to holding the powerful accountable. For more, visit BenCrump.com or call (800) 935-8111.

About Romanucci & Blandin, LLC

Romanucci & Blandin is a Chicago-based national trial practice committed to fighting for victims of negligence, abuse and wrongful death arising from police misconduct, corporate negligence, civil rights actions, medical malpractice, mass torts and class actions. Founded in 1998, the firm is widely recognized for representing plaintiffs in numerous practice areas including: workers' compensation, pharmaceuticals, civil rights, police misconduct, excessive force, aviation, product liability and premises liability. For more information, please visit www.rblaw.net or call (312) 458-1000.

About Pintas & Mullins

Pintas & Mullins is a national law firm, headquartered in Chicago, which has fought for the rights of the seriously injured for more than 35 years. Its practice areas include representation for the victims of environmental injustice, nursing home abuse of seniors, medical malpractice, dangerous products and drugs, and more. Through its close association with Ben Crump law, Pintas & Mullins is a passionate advocate for those without a voice against powerful interests and bad-acting corporations. For more information please visit www.pintas.com or call (800) 935-8111.