Since the murder of George Floyd, Pennsylvanians and people across our nation have marched to condemn the systematic injustice, violence and racism in our law enforcement system. They are justifiably angry, sad and demanding change. We cannot accept a system—informed by centuries-old prejudices and racial bias—that turns a blind eye to injustice and disregards the value of Black life.

For too long, we have looked to increased training or increased resources as if they alone will solve the systemic issues in our law enforcement. And, too many times, we have witnessed the tragic consequences of our inability to fully implement a comprehensive solution to address the racial injustice and police brutality that permeates our nation’s history.

Fortunately, there is a bill before Congress—the Justice in Policing Act of 2020—which would implement truly meaningful and comprehensive reform, and I am proud to be an original co-sponsor of this important legislation.

This proposal would implement necessary reforms to increase transparency and improve police practices, including—among many things—banning chokeholds and carotid holds, implementing a public police misconduct database, prohibiting racial profiling and banning no-knock warrants in drug cases.

Perhaps most important, this bill includes several important measures to ensure that law enforcement will be held accountable for violating an individual’s constitutional rights.

For example, the Justice in Policing Act would reform the controversial “qualified immunity” doctrine, ensuring that our civil liability system is not needlessly shutting the doors of justice on victims of police brutality. This doctrine is a judge-created rule that has become an almost impenetrable shield against victims of police violence. In a recent hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee, one witness highlighted how the doctrine prevented legal action against a police officer who shot and killed a young woman after recklessly shooting at her 6-month-old puppy. The Justice in Policing Act would foster true accountability by removing the qualified immunity doctrine for police officers to ensure that victims can have their day in court for civil claims related to police brutality.

In addition to individual officer accountability, the Justice in Policing Act would enhance accountability for law enforcement agencies. The Department of Justice (DOJ) is currently empowered to investigate systemic constitutional violations in local and state law enforcement agencies through “pattern-or-practice” investigations. While these investigations have largely been abandoned by the Trump Administration, the Obama Administration frequently conducted them to help law enforcement agencies identify areas of concern and implement important reforms through consent decrees, such as better officer accountability standards or use-of-force policies.

Studies have shown that these consent decrees work too. For example, in Detroit, police shootings decreased nearly 64 percent from the five years before the consent decree to the five years after.

The Justice in Policing Act would give the DOJ more tools to effectively conduct these investigations, while also ensuring that state attorneys general have resources to conduct similar investigations at the state level.

In contrast, Senate Republicans attempted to bring their own “police reform” bill—filled with half-measures and false promises—to the senate floor recently. Unlike the Justice in Policing Act, the Republican bill did not explicitly ban chokeholds or no-knock warrants in drug cases. It did not prohibit racial profiling and did not address the militarization of our police forces.

Perhaps most concerning, it did absolutely nothing to ensure meaningful accountability for police officers engaging in misconduct. Instead of real reform, Republicans called for more studies, more trainings and more money to throw at the problem. The senate rejected this anemic measure, and I am hopeful that when we return to Washington, my Republican colleagues will reach across the aisle to work with us on a police reform bill that will actually attempt to meet this moral moment in our nation’s history.

As a United States senator, I own part of the blame for this nation’s collective failure to adequately respond to police violence against the communities they are sworn to protect. Congress has not done enough to lighten this burden from our nation’s communities of color.

To those communities, I want you to know that I am listening. At this historic moment in American history, I promise to redouble my own efforts to ensure that you do not shoulder the burden of this fight on your own. I stand with you and, together, we will win this fight.

***Bob Casey has represented Pennsylvania in the U.S. Senate since 2006.***