



Peter Burgess <peterbnyc@gmail.com>

459 people murdered by police so far in 2018.

1 message

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 To: Peter Burgess <peterbnyc@gmail.com>

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Peter,

The police are murdering Black people in California without consequence. Last year, 162 people were murdered by California police-- and not one was convicted for misuse of deadly force.¹ A 100 year old law grants police too much discretion when deciding whether to use deadly force. District attorneys rarely charge let alone convict killer cops and the Supreme Court routinely gives them a pass. **It's clear that we can't rely on current law and due process to get justice for Black people.**

But, with the introduction of AB 931, we have an historic opportunity to change the law in California so that that cops won't get away scot-free when they kill us. While various jurisdictions across the country have adopted limited use of force policies, this will be the first statewide standard set. Families of victims and community members, activists and organizations have mobilized anew after the murder of Stephon Clark, among so many others. This bill was drafted in the days after Stephon's murder at the hands of

Sacramento police. The law enforcement lobby is really strong in this state, and have mobilized against AB 931--making it their number one priority to defeat it. But the bill has already made it through the assembly, it just needs to pass the state senate. We have to act now while we have momentum.

[Sign the petition: Pass AB 931 to protect Black lives.](#)

On June 19th, the California Senate Committee on Public Safety will hold a hearing and vote on AB 931. This is the first of two committees the bill will have to pass through in order to go to a vote by the full legislative body. If we demand policy change from these elected legislators in California, it will be an important step towards a new statewide

"Americans of good conscience may be fatigued with outrage at unnecessary police killings, but here in California we have a chance to actually do something about it."⁶

- Shirley Webber



Tell California lawmakers to change the rules governing police use of deadly force.

TAKE ACTION

legal standard for the police use of deadly force and a broadening of considerations for accountability. **All law enforcement in California will no longer have absolute immunity to murder us.**

In March, Stephon Clark, unarmed 22-yr-old Black man standing in his family's backyard was murdered by Officers Terrence Mercadal and Jared Robinet. They fired 20 shots at Stephon, claiming to have seen a gun but only a cell phone was recovered at the scene. Stephon was shot seven times in the back while his family was inside the house.² Despite calls for justice and weeks of protest, District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert has yet to bring charges against Officers Mercadal and Robinet. In fact, there have been 22 police murders since Schubert was elected, and she hasn't brought charges against any cops.³ Schubert was just re-elected last week, despite her horrendous record. This erases any chances of justice for Stephon's family. We won't stand for this injustice. **We must call on the members of this committee to advance this bill and change the system that leaves so many families with a void.**

If we are going to see any sort of police accountability in California, it's going to have to come from policy change on a state or local level.

AB 931 would change state policy by limiting the use of deadly force so that it's only authorized when necessary to prevent imminent and serious bodily injury or death. **Split-second officer decisions about perceived threat would no longer justify deadly force**, other options such as warnings, verbal persuasion or other non lethal methods of resolution and de-escalation must be attempted first.

Between 2005 and 2016, only two police killings carried out during an arrest were deemed unjustified out of nearly 1,200 reported by local police departments, according to California Department of Justice data.⁴ Too many district attorneys are unwilling to charge police when they murder people in our communities. At times we've been able to depend on the Department of Justice when local systems fail us, but known racist and U.S. Attorney General, Jefferson Beauregard Sessions III, has blatantly attacked Black communities. We must take this fight to the state and local level where we have opportunities to make change.

As is, the criminal legal system is not designed to achieve justice for Black people when state-sanctioned violence claims our lives. It is quite the opposite. The Supreme Court recently gave the green light for police departments to shoot first. Dissenting in an April case, Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote that the ruling "sends an alarming signal to law enforcement officers and the public. It tells officers that they can shoot first and think later, and it tells the public that palpably unreasonable conduct will go unpunished."⁵

That's why this legislation is so important, it's one of the only avenues for accountability presently available.

Angela Y. Davis reminds us that freedom is a constant struggle. Since slave patrols in the 1800s, Black people have fought for freedom from the oppressive institution of policing. We are in this struggle for bodily autonomy and the sanctity of our lives. We are fighting against excessive policing as an institution that upholds white supremacy and brutalizes Black lives without consequence. We are fighting against police unions and law enforcement associations as some of the most powerful lobbying forces in California.

We are using all the tools at our disposal to change the rules to make the world a place where all Black people can thrive. **AB 931 is the tool we need right now.**

Sign the petition to demand a new legal standard for police use of deadly force in California.

Until Justice is Real,

Arisha, Rashad, Scott, Clarise, Anay, Kristen, Marena, Tamar, Lorrان, Daniel, and the rest of the Color Of Change team

References:

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Color Of Change is building a movement to elevate the voices of Black folks and our allies, and win real social and political change. **Help keep our movement strong.**

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