

October 19, 2015

Chairman Bob Goodlatte
House Judiciary Committee
United States House of Representatives

Ranking Member John Conyers, Jr.
House Judiciary Committee
United States House of Representatives

Chairman Jim Sensenbrenner
House Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security,
and Investigations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives

Ranking Member Sheila Jackson Lee
House Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security,
and Investigations Subcommittee
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Goodlatte, Ranking Member Conyers, Chairman Sensenbrenner and Ranking Member Jackson Lee,

We, the undersigned organizations, write in support of the Police Reporting of Information, Data and Evidence (PRIDE) Act. As has been highlighted in recent news stories in the [Washington Post](#) and the [Guardian](#), reliable and uniform reporting is unavailable on law enforcement-involved shootings and use of force in localities across the United States. Government officials, stakeholders, and the public are left without the information needed to foster accountability.

The PRIDE Act (H.R. 3481) takes a critical step toward improving transparency for accountability. While there are other federal initiatives in place that are intended to capture this essential data, most are not tied to funding and are entirely voluntary. The result is the gap encountered in consistent and comparable reporting nationwide. The bill, in addition to requiring states to report to the Department of Justice any incident where a civilian is shot or seriously injured by a law enforcement officer, and any incident where a law enforcement officer is shot or seriously injured by a civilian, would make grants to eligible States and Indian tribes, including for the cost of complying with the reporting requirements and the cost of establishing necessary systems required to investigate and report incidents. It also requires, as a condition of eligibility, that recipients demonstrate that the use-of-force policy for law enforcement officers in the State or Indian tribe is publicly available.

The specificity required in the reporting is also laudable: the reports must include, at a minimum for each individual who was shot, injured, or killed: the person's gender, race, ethnicity, and age; the date, time, and location of the incident; the number of officers involved in the incident; the number of civilians involved in the incident; whether the civilian was armed with a weapon; and the type of force used against the officer, the civilian, or both, including the types of weapons used. Public access to comprehensive accurate information of this sort is essential to the meaningful exercise of the First Amendment rights to speech and to petition government for redress of grievances.

This bill comes at crucial point. The Congress and the country have a heightened awareness of police-civilian confrontations and the often-tragic results. The data required to be reported is imperative to identifying how and where racial bias occurs in police-relating use of force incidents. Additionally, the

grants to the states also provide for use-of-force training for law enforcement agencies and personnel, including de-escalation and bias training.

The urgency of the problems is reflected in the [Police Data Initiative](#) launched recently by the White House, as part of which 21 police departments have committed to release a combined total of 101 data sets that have not been released to the public. The types of data include uses of force, police pedestrian and vehicle stops, officer involved shootings and more, helping the communities gain visibility into key information on police/citizen encounters. The PRIDE Act will both institutionalize and, if properly funded, provide support for the necessary work currently being done and serve to sustain it into the future.

We thank the Senators for introducing the PRIDE Act, and encourage its passage. We look forward to working with you on this important legislation to promote transparency and accountability of law enforcement to the public. Please contact Patrice McDermott at [OpenTheGovernment.org](mailto:pmcdermott@openthegovernment.org) (pmcdermott@openthegovernment.org) with any questions.

Sincerely,

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Amnesty International USA

Arab American Institute

Bill of Rights Defense Committee

Californians Aware

Defending Dissent Foundation

Demand Progress

Government Accountability Project

Media Freedom Foundation

MoveOn

National Coalition Against Censorship

OpenTheGovernment.org

PEN American Center

Project Censored

Public Citizen

Restore The Fourth

Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press

Society of Professional Journalists

Student Press Law Center

Sunlight Foundation

Woodhull Freedom Foundation

Cc: Representative Joaquin Castro; Members of the House Judiciary Committee and House Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations Subcommittee: Representative Karen Bass, Representative Mike Bishop, Representative Ken Buck, Representative Steve Chabot, Representative Jason Chaffetz, Representative Judy Chu, Representative David Cicilline, Representative Steve Cohen, Representative Doug Collins, Representative Rob DeSantis, Representative Ted Deutch, Representative Blake Farenthold, Representative Randy J. Forbes, Representative Trent Franks, Representative Louie Gohmert, Representative Trey Gowdy, Representative Luis Gutierrez, Representative Darrell Issa, Representative Hakeem Jeffries, Representative Hank Johnson, Representative Jim Jordan, Representative Steve King, Representative Raul Labrador, Representative Zoe Lofgren, Representative Tom Marino, Representative Jerrold Nadler, Representative Scott Peters, Res. Com. Pedro Pierluisi, Representative Ted Poe, Representative John Ratcliffe, Representative Cedric Richmond, Representative Lamar Smith, Representative Dave Trott, Representative Mimi Walters.