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TITLE: “Voices from the Front: An Overdue
Reckoning with Structural Racism in Policing”

Testimony

Families United 4 Justice Network (FU4J
Network)

Before Judiciary Committee on Oversight and
Reform Act

Friday, June 19, 2020

Committee Chairwoman, Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney, and Ranking Member, US Representative Jim Jordan, and members of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, I bring you greetings on behalf of our Executive Board, impacted family members, and community members of the National Families United 4 Justice Network— FU4J.

My name is Cephus Johnson, I am known as, Uncle Bobby X, uncle of Oscar Grant. Oscar is the son of my youngest sister, Wanda Johnson. I am the Co-Founder of Love Not Blood Campaign, Co-Founder of Families United 4 Justice National Network, Founder of California Families United 4 Justice Network, and Founder of the Oscar Grant Foundation, which is now led by my sister, Oscar's mother Wanda Johnson. I have been advocating for police accountability and transparency for 11 years since the murder of my nephew Oscar Grant on January 1st, 2009, early New Year's morning at the Fruitvale Bart Station.

It is an honor for Families United 4 Justice to provide written testimony on the topic of "Structural Racism in Policing." On this extremely important Juneteenth date. Families United 4 Justice joins the nation in condemning

the policing tactics, actions and inactions that lead to the death of Mr. George Floyd. We are extremely hurt, and we grieve with the nation at the horrendous killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Aubrey and now Rashard Brooks. These names represent just a few in a much longer list of tragedies impacting communities of color. We offer our deepest condolences and prayers to these families.

There is no horror comparable to watching your loved one be murdered. That horror is forever etched into your memory, perhaps because it could have been prevented. The power of the police to use deadly force is the most significant responsibility we give to any public official and that responsibility must be guided by the goal of safeguarding human life and protecting human rights. Current law results in officers killing civilians far more often than is

necessary, leaving many families and communities devastated and the public less safe. These tragedies disproportionately impact communities of color.

The senseless murder of George Floyd has gained attention around the world, people from every walk of life are protesting that Justice be fair, transparent, and equal!

It is important that the officers involved be prosecuted. It is impacted family's belief that accountability and transparency is the key to building trust between the policing agencies and the communities. Families United 4 Justice network are fully aware that addressing issues within the local policing agency is an exceedingly small part of a larger more complex construct comprised of the policing culture. The culture of policing originated from the patty

rollers, slave patrols organized by groups of armed white men who monitored and enforced discipline upon black slave.

I'd like to share with you what we as impacted families feel must be addressed. We strongly recommend a national use-of-force policy included in state and local policing agency standards. Mandatory de-escalation requirements for all officers and policies that require the use of de-escalation tactics as a priority. Prohibition of all physical restraint maneuvers on or above the neck (No choke Holds). Police qualified immunity should be removed. Under federal law, police officers who infringe on civilians' constitutional rights can be sued in federal court, but the qualified-immunity doctrine shields them from such suits unless their actions violated "clearly established law. Federal Data Collection of use-

of-force data, traffic stop data, and pedestrian stops and detention data, of all demographics. A National database of officers with patterns of misconduct. We wholeheartedly support the passing of the “Justice in Policing Act” which specifically addresses the loopholes that continue to allow policing tragedies free of oversight and accountability and environments that foster racial tension. Mandatory requirements that all officers render immediate medical aid to any person experiencing a health crisis. (whether in custody or not). Mandatory requirement that officers intervene where physical force is being applied to either stop or attempt to stop another officer when force is being inappropriately used. Mandatory Law Enforcement Accreditation as a national requirement. Provide the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department enforcement oversight against pattern and practice discrimination.

In closing, on behalf of impacted families, I thank you for allowing our voice to be heard. Today at this critical time in our history, Impacted family members, appeal to the House Committee on Oversight and Reform to pass legislation that provides National guidelines to reform the system of policing, to hold police officers accountable, to snuff out that sick patty rollers culture that has thrived in the belly of the policing since its beginning. As a Black man, I can unequivocally attest to the perpetual existence of discriminatory practices that remain a haunting reality for people of color throughout our nation. It is critical that we first acknowledge the pressing need for a National legislative approach to local policing agency change, and urgently begin the process of reimagining today's police culture, enlisting

those who value the sanctity of life and the
protection of human rights

Thank you, Ms. Chairwoman