

February 15, 2021

Dear Senator Elvi Grey-Jackson,

The summer of 2020 was one for the history books. Not only was the world rocked by a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, but we also saw a massive uprising in the United States against police violence and brutality. The George Floyd and Breonna Taylor uprising shook society to its core and highlighted contradictions that can no longer be overlooked or ignored. The truth is, is that the United States is a republic built on the violent exploitation of Black and Indigenous Americans. This country must have a difficult conversation with itself and begin to implement change. Alaska is no exception.

There is serious mistrust between the community and police. Not only is this a national problem, it is a local one as well. Public safety is more than just a low body count, or death toll. It is transparency and accountability. It is the government, developing and implementing policies that are necessary to facilitate public trust and confidence in law enforcement. It's more than coffee with a cop, a ride-along, or a public relations campaign that tells Alaskans what an excellent job the police are doing. It is having difficult conversations, acknowledging past wrongs, and striving for improvement. That is why we support Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson's (Anchorage) proposed public safety policy changes.

Alaska Senate bills (SB) 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 46 are vital and necessary if Alaska is going to build public trust and confidence in law enforcement. For example, SB 1 would regulate the use of chokeholds, SB 2 would require that law enforcement deescalate volatile situations before using deadly force, and SB 46 would establish a statewide use-of-force database. Transparency and accountability are public safety choices and Alaska must adopt a modern approach to public safety. The state is woefully behind. Not only will this protect the public, but it also protects law enforcement. These bills create a dynamic in which the public and law enforcement are partners in public safety, not adversaries. For this environment to be established it requires trust and as of today, the state of Alaska does not have the requisite policies to begin this long and difficult process.

We are calling on the 32nd Alaska Legislature to pass these bills and for Gov. Mike Dunleavy to sign them into law. As every Alaskan knows, the state is facing an unprecedented social and economic crisis. Public safety changes of this nature are not secondary and are equally important as we rebuild Alaska. Public safety is critical infrastructure, and these bills should be considered as such.

February 18, 2021

Alaska State Senate

State Affairs Committee members, C/O Senator.Mike.Shower@akleg.gov

Judiciary Committee members, C/O Senator.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov

RE: Support for Senate Bills 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 46, to reform policing

Senators:

I urge you to pass Senate Bills 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 and 46 to ban chokeholds, control shooting at vehicles, de-escalate confrontations, and track police use of force statewide.

We know police misuse of force can and does happen in Alaska.

Police over-response intimidates citizens and keeps them from calling for help. Consequently, the whole community is less safe. Case in point:

Just over a week ago, in early February, Wasilla police pinned a young Alaska Native woman with a knee to her jaw, and then hogtied her hands to her ankles, and carried her trussed body like a hunting kill. The Wasilla police tactics were violent, degrading, and intentionally painful. The police tactics, legal or not, were clearly out of proportion to the unarmed woman's disruption in a Wal-Mart store.

As a direct result of the Wasilla case, a few days later, a young relative of mine was afraid to call the police when he was harassed and followed for several blocks in Anchorage's Midtown. My relative is a minority, and the street person who harassed him was both an ethnic minority and apparently intoxicated. My relative, although afraid for his personal safety, did not want to feel responsible for a possibly violent police response to his harasser.

Regarding SB 46, an open public record of police use of force is long overdue. We can't improve police policies unless we have a public record of forceful encounters. I am haunted by the police shootings of disturbed citizens over the years, sometimes by SWAT teams instead of de-escalation: the young albino man, the Pacific Islander with the baseball bat, the man with a BB gun, the recluse in his own home in Upper Huffman, another disturbed man in his own home in Eagle River. That is short list from my memory. We need complete public records: a statewide cataloging of police use of force.

In 2020, Alaskans demonstrated in many communities following the horrendous street execution of George Floyd, and other police violence. You can take steps to avoid police misuse of force here in Alaska. Pass SB 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, and 46.

Nancy Pease, 19300 Villages Scenic Parkway, Anchorage, Alaska 99516

Cc: Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov; Senator.Roger.Holland@akleg.gov;
Senator.Tom.Begich@akleg.gov



ALASKA BLACK CAUCUS

P.O. Box 212051
Anchorage, AK 99521

thealaskablackcaucus@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern

February 11, 2021

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Black Caucus in support of criminal justice reform and the following bills under consideration by the Alaska Legislature.

SB1. An Act prohibiting the use of chokeholds by peace officers; and relating to justification of use of force by peace officers.

SB2. An Act relating to reporting acts of misconduct by peace officers; relating to de-escalation procedures used by peace officers; relating to peace officer certificates; and relating to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

SB3. An Act relating to the Alaska Police Standards Council; requiring a peace officer to attempt to de-escalate a situation and use alternative non-lethal methods of engagement before discharging a firearm; and requiring a peace officer to provide an oral warning before discharging a firearm.

SB4. An Act relating to justification of use of force by a police officer; and relating to shooting at a moving vehicle.

SB46. An Act relating to the Alaska Police Standards Council; relating to municipal correctional officers and municipal correctional employees; making municipal police officers subject to police standards; establishing a statewide use-of-force database in the Department of Public Safety; requiring a municipality that employs a person as a municipal police officer or in a municipal correctional facility, the Department of Corrections, or the Department of Public Safety to report for inclusion in the database incidents of use of force by state and municipal police, probation, parole, and correctional officers and municipal correctional facility employees; and providing for an effective date.

SB7. An Act requiring the Department of Public Safety to publish certain policies and procedures on the department's internet website.

The Alaska Black Caucus submits that these legislative enactments would establish greater transparency with public law enforcement and improve the level of trust by the community in local public safety organizations.

Sincerely,

Celeste Hodge Growden
President/CEO

cc: Alaska Black Caucus Justice Committee

The purpose of the Alaska Black Caucus shall be to assert the Constitutional Rights of Black people:

(1) by involvement in the decision making processes of the community and state by becoming a contributing part of those duly authorized and representative bodies affecting the lives and livelihoods of Black people; (2) by actively supporting and working in areas which help to advance the educational, cultural, political, and economic well-being of the Black community; (3) by acting as a liaison and coordinating entity for the various minority interests within the community and State; (4) by making available accurate and timely information on relevant issues and areas of concern to minority people; (5) by recreating awareness that the struggle to achieve total equality has not yet been achieved; (6) by emphasizing the ever-increasing need for Blacks and minorities to make renewed attempts toward attaining these goals.