

Biden marks two year anniversary of police murder of George Floyd by signing pro-cop executive order

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On Tuesday, two years after the police murder of African-American George Floyd was captured on cell phone footage, sparking global protests against unending police violence, US President Joe Biden signed a token executive order dubbed the “Executive Order on Advancing Effective, Accountable Policing and Criminal Justice Practices to Enhance Public Trust and Public Safety.”

While aimed at presenting the illusion of “police reform” the toothless executive order will do nothing to stem the daily slaughter of workers, retirees and youth at the hands, boots, knees and barrels of US police.

Since the murder of Floyd, police have continued to kill at a steady pace. Data compiled by mappingpoliceviolence.org found that in 2020, 1,132 people were killed by police in the US, while in 2021, 1,144 people were killed.

The site found that there were only 15 days in 2021 when police did not kill someone, and only 18 in 2020.

While police have continued to kill an average of three people a day, mappingpoliceviolence.org found that only 1 percent of police killings last year led to charges, with fewer than 1 percent resulting in a conviction.

Prior to signing the executive order, Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris gave speeches presenting it as a meaningful step towards “accountability” and a way to “build trust” between bourgeois cops and the working class. Both politicians went out of their way to present the institution of policing as fundamentally good and the issue of unending police murder as purely a racial one that only affected “Black Americans.”

While African Americans are a disproportionate number of those killed by police, the fact is white people make up the largest number of those 1,000 people killed by police each year. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data compiled from 2009 through 2019 also found that Native Americans were 1.2 times more likely to be killed by police compared to African American people, and 2.2 times more likely than whites.

Regardless of skin pigmentation, police very frequently kill people suffering from a mental health crisis. An ongoing database compiled by the *Washington Post* found that between 2015 and 2021, over 20 percent of those killed by police, more than 1,400, were suffering from a mental illness or an acute mental health crisis.

The primary factor in determining if one is to become a victim of police violence is class. A March 2019 study published in the American Public Health Association, by Drs. Justin Feldman, Sofia Ruskin, Brent Coull and Nancy Kreiger found that “[o]verall, police-related death rates were highest in neighborhoods with the greatest concentrations of low-income residents...”

Biden’s executive order, ostensibly aimed at “reforming” the police, will do nothing of the sort. The order requires the Department of Justice to “promote officer wellness” and “support programs” as well as requiring an “updated approach” to “recruitment, hiring, promotion and retention of law enforcement officers.”

The measure signed by Biden drops many of the limited aspects of the “George Floyd Act Justice in Policing Act” which passed the House in March 2021 along party lines, but failed in the Senate later that year.

This failure, Biden explained was due to “our Republican colleagues” who “opposed any meaningful reform ... so we got to work on this executive order.”

In his speech, Biden calmly comforted his “Republican colleagues” and their fascistic supporters in police departments around the country, stating that the executive order contains “benefits for law enforcement.” He added that he thought the majority of police were “good” and “brave” including “Border Patrol agents.”

As with other fascistic attacks on the democratic rights of the population, from abortion rights, to voting rights, to protecting LGBTQ persons, the Democratic Party as proven itself incapable and unwilling to do anything that would incur the wrath of their “Republican colleagues.”

After the George Floyd bill failed to garner the necessary 60 votes to overcome a Senate filibuster, the Democrats, instead of eliminating the filibuster, let the bill languish and die.

While the order mentions the practice of “no-knock” raids, utilized by police in the killing of Breonna Taylor and Amir Locke, the order does not explicitly ban the practice, instead saying that the use of “choke-holds,” “carotid restraints” and “no knock entries” are “restricted ... to a limited set of circumstances.”

That the order presents no meaningful check on police abuses was evident in the fact that it had the backing of the largest and most powerful police organizations in the country. In his speech, Biden personally thanked these organizations, the heads of whom attended the signing.

“Here today,” Biden said, “I want to thank the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Fraternal Order of Police, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association,” and the “Major Cities Chiefs Association” who “stepped up and endorsed what we are talking about.”

In a comment that perhaps speaks more truth than he intended, Biden hailed his executive order as the “most significant police reform in decades.”

He added that it will only apply to just over 100,000

federal police officers, leaving out some 700,000 state police who are not obligated to participate in any of the limited recommendations outlined in the order such as wearing body-cameras or banning choke-holds, unless “authorized.”

Facing a potential debacle in the midterm elections, the floundering Biden administration was obligated to at least present the illusion of action and “accountability” on police reform where, in reality, none exists. While some “left” Democrats occasionally paid lip-service to “defunding the police,” Biden himself never did. Immediately following the 2020 election, leading Democrats denounced the slogan as the reason they were unable to capitalize on the unpopularity of Trump in the congressional elections.

Biden has repeatedly distanced himself in word and deed from the “defund” slogan. During his latest State of the Union address, he declared, “We should all agree the answer is not to defund the police, but is to fund the police. Fund them. Fund them.”

Following the fascist shooting in Buffalo, Biden spoke last weekend at the National Peace Officers’ Memorial Service, where he repeated his love of the police, telling the cops in attendance, “we should agree it’s [time] not to defund the police, it’s to fund the police.” Biden called on “every mayor, governor” to use billions in unspent pandemic-related stimulus money to hire more cops.

“Spend it now, this summer, when crime historically spikes,” Biden said.



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