

Cephus Johnson
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Thank you to everyone for this important discussion, I bring you greeting from California Families United 4 Justice Network. It is an honor to provide testimony as an impacted family member on this panel today.

I am Cephus Johnson, affectionately known as Uncle Bobby X, the 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 California Families United 4 Justice Network, and Co-founder of the National Families United 4 Justice Network.

I have been advocating for police accountability and transparency for 12 years, since the murder of my nephew Oscar Grant, in Oakland California at the Fruitvale Bart Station, by police officer Johannes Mehserle, while he was lying face down in prone position with his hands behind his back, Criss-cross to be handcuffed. His murder was quickly upload to YouTube and social media for the world to witness.

There is no horror comparable to witnessing your loved one being murdered on video. That horror is forever etched in your memory perhaps because it could have been prevented. The power of the police to use deadly force is the most significant responsibility that we can give any public official. This responsibility must be guided common sense legislation with the goal of safeguarding human lives and protecting human rights.

Since this country founding, Black American has struggle, fought, and died for the right to be free equal citizens. The long list of Black people unjustly brutalized by police shows that the fight for justice must continue. Current law results in police officers killing far more civilian than is necessary, leaving far too many families devastate and the community less safe. These killing disproportionately impact

communities of color. Black people are 2x more likely to be killed by the police.

George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Oscar Grant, Michael Brown, and so many others deserve so much more from this country. These heart wrenching murders has sparked protest across America. George Floyd murder was not the first captured by fellow citizens on their cell phones. In 2009, Oscar Grant murder by transit police officer Mehserle was also captured on cell phones. How many deaths, by police, could have been prevented if policing agencies had listened to our call over 12 years ago for police accountability, transparency, and lapel cameras. Since the murder of Oscar Grant on January 1, 2009 until today over 1,300 men woman and children has been killed by the police in this State of California.

The National reckoning of the crisis of systemic racism in the policing system is critical to dismantling a policing system rooted in the nation original sin of bondage and slavery. The culture of policing originated from the patty rollers, slave patrols organized by groups of armed white men who monitored and enforce discipline on Black slaves. A system for too long that has perpetuated the criminalization, profiling, surveillance of Black and Brown bodies that resulted in the lynching and murder of countless Black people.

We have known this truth of police violence for years. In this moment of reckoning, it is critical that we center the humanity and dignity of those impacted by police violence, on this understanding, it is not the issue of training that needs to be address, it is the culture of policing that must be changed. Police culture impacts how they interact with citizens they encounter, whether or not they issue a warning or make an arrest, how they respond to a fleeing suspect, how they write an

arrest report to justify certain actions, and whether or not they will lie under oath.

We must not let this moment pass without sweeping reforms. These reforms must value Black Lives. It must push forward policies that calls for police accountability and transparency and common-sense legislation that protect human rights and saves human lives.

Professionalism and ethics are important in policing today because they are the guidelines and rules for law enforcement officers. A study on police behavior, police scholars have agreed, that the organizational culture of policing – the set of informal, cultural norms that are unique to the occupation of law enforcement – is the most important determinant of police behavior.

The policing culture as we know it today is adhering to a code of silence, with grave consequences for violating it, and maintaining loyalty to other officers above all else. The frequent use of internal cover-ups within police departments to protect officers who are habitual offenders of excessive use of force. The organizational structure and culture of policing fuels the most detrimental challenge: Policies aimed at reforms, including implicit bias training and body camera use fall short because they do not address the root cause of incidents, such as officer-involved shootings. The culture resolves internal policing issues, such as civil payouts, taxpayer dollars resolves issue with problem police officers rather that indictment or trial.

The biggest challenge facing policing training is its toxic culture fostered by police recruitment, training, and its leadership. The training with emphasis on officer safety, pits officers against the community they serve. A warrior mentality imbued in police training and recruitment

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attracts individuals who may not always be the best fit to deal with the social work issues prevalent on the front lines of policing.

Let me be clear, there can be no justice for:

Oscar Grant, Stephon Clark, Miles Hall, Sahleem Tindle,

Willie McCoy, Angel Ramos, Colby Friday,

Nathaniel Pickett, Kenneth Ross, Ernest Duenez.

For I am Oscar Grant, Hands Up Don't Shoot, I can't Breathe, No Just No Peace, Black Lives Matter. These powerful phrases will continue to be rallying calls for fair minded People seeking to live up to this country core principle, Equal Justice Under the Law and Police Accountability.