






Reformist reforms vs. abolitionist steps in policing

These charts break down the difference between reformist reforms which continue or expand the reach of policing, and abolitionist steps that work to chip away and reduce its overall impact. As we struggle to decrease the power of policing there are also positive and pro-active investments we can make in community health and well-being.

DOES THIS...	reduce funding to police?	challenge the notion that police increase safety?	reduce tools / tactics / technology police have at their disposal?	reduce the scale of policing?
 BODY CAMERAS	INCREASES. Equipping police officers with body cameras will require more money going toward police budgets.	NO. Body cameras are pitched as making police more accountable, increasing the idea that policing, done "right," makes people safe.	INCREASES. Body cameras provide the police with another tool, increasing surveillance and increasing police budgets to acquire more gadgets.	INCREASES. Body cameras are based on the idea that police who do not use "excessive force" are less threatening. But police can turn off body cameras and, when used, footage often doesn't have the impact that community members want, or is used for surveillance.
 COMMUNITY POLICING	NO. Advocates of community policing argue that departments will have to hire more cops to be in neighborhoods and in the community.	NO. This is based on the belief that policing is focused on keeping people safe, and the violence of policing is caused by a "breakdown of trust" with the community.	INCREASES. Cops are trained in additional tactic and approaches.	NO. More community police means that the scale of policing will increase, particularly in Black, Brown, poor neighborhoods, where there is perceived "mistrust".
 MORE TRAINING	NO. More training will require more funding and resources going to police to develop and run trainings.	NO. This furthers the belief that better training would ensure that we can rely on police for safety, and that instances of police harm and violence occur because of a lack of training.	INCREASES all of these.	NO. This will increase the scope of policing, given the type of training. For instance, some advocate for police to be trained on how to respond to mental health crises, furthering the idea that police are the go to for every kind of problem.
 CIVILIAN REVIEW / OVERSIGHT BOARDS	NO. In some cases, there would be an increase in funding, whereas in other cases there would be no changes.	NO. Overseeing the police through a board presumes that cases of excessive force, killing, lying, planting false information, etc. are exceptional occurrences rather than part of the daily violence of policing.	NO. Some argue for Civilian Review Boards "with teeth," the power to make decisions and take away policing tools and tactics. However, a board with that level of power has never existed despite 50+ years of organizing for them.	NO. This further entrenches policing as a legitimate, reformable system, with a "community" mandate. Some boards, tasked with overseeing them, become structurally invested in their existence.
 "JAIL KILLER COPS": PROSECUTE POLICE WHO HAVE KILLED AND ABUSED CIVILIANS.	NO. Prosecuting police does not lead to changes in funding or resourcing police.	NO. Individualizing police violence creates a false distinction between "good police" (who keep us safe), and "bad police" (who are unusual cases), rather than challenging the assumption that policing creates safety or examining policing as systemic violence.	NO. Often, media attention in high profile cases leads to more resources and technology, including body cameras and "training."	NO. This reinforces the prison industrial complex by portraying killer / corrupt cops as "bad apples" rather than part of a regular system of violence, and reinforces the idea that prosecution and prison serve real justice.

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SUSPEND THE USE OF PAID ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE FOR COPS UNDER INVESTIGATION

YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.

YES. It challenges the notion that policing violence, and the administrative costs it incurs, are essential risks of creating "safety."

YES. Access to paid administrative leave lessens the consequences of use of force, and presumes the right of police to use violence at all.

YES. The less financial support for police undergoing investigation for killing and excessive use of force, the less support for policing.



WITHHOLD PENSIONS AND DON'T REHIRE COPS INVOLVED IN EXCESSIVE FORCE

YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.

YES. It challenges the notion that killings and excessive force are exceptions, rather than the rule.

YES. It reduces the ability of police forces to move around or re-engage cops known for their use of violence.

YES.



REQUIRE COPS TO BE LIABLE FOR MISCONDUCT SETTLEMENTS

YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as municipalities no longer pay for policing's harm against community members.

YES. It challenges the notion that policing and all its costs are essential components of safety. Community members should not pay for its inevitable violence.

YES. It creates pressure for police to account for their actions, at least financially, and limits legitimacy of policing violence as inevitable

YES.



CAP OVERTIME ACCRUAL + OT PAY FOR MILITARY EXERCISES

YES. This can INCREASE community-based budgets as we won't have to pay for cops learning how to better make war on our communities.

YES. It challenges the notion that we need police to be trained for "counterterrorism" and other military-style action and surveillance in the guise of increasing "safety."

YES. Weapons training and expos are used to scale up policing infrastructure and shape goals for future tools, tactics, and technology.

YES. This stops police from increasing their legitimacy, capacity, and skills as "the blue line" in order to expand their reach over our daily lives and community spaces.



WITHDRAW PARTICIPATION IN POLICE MILITARIZATION PROGRAMS

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PRIORITIZE SPENDING ON COMMUNITY HEALTH, EDUCATION, AFFORDABLE HOUSING

YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease its resources.

YES. Prioritizing funding resources also creates space to imagine, learn about, and make resources that actually create well-being.

YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the expansion of tools and technology.

YES. If we decrease funding for policing, this will decrease the size, scope and capacity of systems of policing.



REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE POLICE FORCE

YES.

YES.

YES.

YES.