



WASHINGTON BUREAU · NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
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May 29, 2015

The Honorable Steve Cohen
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: NAACP STRONG SUPPORT FOR *THE POLICE TRAINING AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW ACT OF 2015*, H.R. 2302

Dear Congressman Cohen:

On behalf of the NAACP, our nation's oldest, largest and most widely-recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization, I would like to thank you for your leadership in sponsoring H.R. 2302, the *Police Training and Independent Review Act of 2015*. Upon enactment, this legislation will clearly begin to help communities restore the much needed integrity and trust between law enforcement agents and the people they are paid to serve and protect.

The majority of law enforcement officers are hard working men and women, whose concern for the safety of those they are charged with protecting and serving is often paramount, even when their own safety is on the line. However, if and when even one of their colleagues engages in behavior that is seen as insensitive to the culture of a community, whether it be conscious or subconscious, the trust of the entire community can be, and will be, lost. The fact that your legislation makes receipt of federal funds contingent upon enrollees at law enforcement academies receiving sensitivity training on ethnic and racial bias, cultural diversity, and police interaction with the disabled, mentally ill, and new immigrants will help build the trust that is necessary. The further requirement of your bill, mandating that states adopt independent investigations and prosecutions of law enforcement officers in cases where one or more of the alleged offenses involves an officer's use of deadly force in the course of carrying out his or her official duties will help solidify that trust to ensure that concerns of the community are heard.

Thank you again for your leadership in this area. We are committed to continuing to activate our grassroots membership in addition to our national staff in support of H.R. 2302. We look forward to working with you. Should you have any questions or comments on the NAACP position, please feel free to contact me at (202) 812-1909 or (202) 463-2940.

Sincerely,

Hilary O. Shelton
Director, NAACP Washington Bureau &
Senior Vice President for Policy and Advocacy