



**PRESS RELEASE**  
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**U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Releases [Report](#):  
*Police Use of Force: An Examination of Modern Policing Practices***

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights released its [report](#), *Police Use of Force: An Examination of Modern Policing Practices*. The Commission investigated whether the rates and usage of excessive force by police are consistent with constitutional administration of justice and the civil rights of persons of color, persons with disabilities, and LGBT communities. The Commission evaluated proven and promising policies and practices which may help minimize use of force and the perception or reality of unconscious bias in policing. The report provides important recommendations to the President, Congress, federal agencies, state and local governments, police departments, and other policy/decision makers.

Chair Catherine E. Lhamon said, “This report addresses a searingly persistent schism in American life, with actual and perceived police misconduct seeming to pit communities against the officers sworn to protect and serve them. The Commission’s recommendations for forward progress are measured, appropriate, and urgent; our nation’s communities need their implementation.”

**Key findings** from the Commission majority include:

- Police officers have the difficult and admirable job of providing crucial services to communities. They are often put in harm’s way, necessitating the use of force. Accordingly, officers must operate with the highest standards of professionalism and accountability.
- All residents should be confident that interactions with officers will be fair, consistent with constitutional norms, and free from bias or discrimination. Many communities are not confident in these expectations. They, along with policing professionals, have called for additional policies, procedures, training and accountability measures in departments and the justice system, to foster better community-police relations and prevent excessive uses of force.
- No comprehensive national database exists to capture police uses of force. The best available data reflects high rates nationally, with increased likelihood that police will use force against people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBT individuals. Poor data and lack of sufficient training leave officers and the public at risk. Repeated incidents against people of color and people with disabilities, especially those with mental health disabilities, combined with a lack of accurate

data, transparency, and accountability, foster a perception that police use of force in these communities is unlawful and unsafe.

**Key recommendations** from the Commission majority include:

- The Department of Justice should return to oversight of constitutional policing, including pursuant to its authority in 42 U.S.C. § 14141 to investigate pattern or practice of unlawful conduct, and the use of consent decrees where necessary. It should robustly support local efforts on constitutional policing practices, including collaborative reform at the request of police departments through the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and maintaining the Community Relations Service (CRS).
- Congress should fund grants, facilitated by the Department of Justice, to (A) incentivize evidence-based practices that reduce incidents of excessive force; and (B) support effective external police oversight and research regarding best practices for such oversight.
- The Commission majority called for departments to implement practical reforms to stem the tide of perceived conflict between police officers and their communities, and to recommit this nation to the principles of fairness and equal treatment, including at the hands of police, that are core to democracy.

In April 2015, at the John Jay College of Law in New York City, the Commission held a public **briefing** on the subject, hearing from twenty-two panelists. Their testimony, along with that submitted by members of the public, played an integral part in informing this report. In addition to this testimony, the Commission considered evidence from law enforcement and court officials, community leaders and police reform advocates, scholars, and legal experts, as well as testimony taken in by the Commission's State Advisory Committees in Minnesota, New York, Maine, and Delaware.

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*The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is the only independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights and reporting annually on federal civil rights enforcement. Our 51 state Advisory Committees offer a broad perspective on civil rights concerns at state and local levels. For information about the Commission, please visit [www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov) and follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).*