

Policy Design: George Floyd Justice in Policing Act 2020

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Policy Design: George Floyd Justice in Policing Act 2020**Abstract:**

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020 (HR 7120) was introduced to curb police brutality. The bill was sponsored by Karen Bass, a Representative for California's 37th Congressional District. Bass's political affiliation is Democrat. The bill was introduced to the 116th Congress on Jun 8, 2020 (Congres.Gov, 2020). The Bill introduction was after the murder of George Floyd by the police officers. The incident depicted the entrenched systemic racism in the USA. For that reason, the introduction of the bill was meant to restructure the police sector due to the massive outcry and demonstrations throughout the USA. Congress .gov (2020) shows that the bill's purpose was to promote accountability in the police departments. Officers would be held accountable for all their actions while on duty.

Keywords: Policy Design, Justice, George Floyd.

The H.R 7120: George Floy Justice in Policing Act 2020 was never passed by the Senate. The bill was introduced to the 116th Congress on Jun 8, 2020 (Congres.Gov, 2020). The magnitude of the George Floyd murder prompted the democrats led to a discussion by the House Committee on the Judiciary on Jun 17, 2020 (GovTrack.us, 2022). The committee approved the bill and recommended the bill progress to subsequent stages. On June 19, 2020, the House Committee on the Judiciary provided a detailed report on the legislation and its relevance to American society (GovTrack.us, 2022). The approval depicts

that restoring sanity in the policing system was a priority in Congress. The bill was published on June 22, 2020, and was passed by the House. The next stage was approval in the Senate (GovTrack.us, 2022). However, failure to pass led to the reintroduction of the same bill in the House of Congress as H.R. 1280: George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021. The reintroduction was attributed to the end of the 116th congress session. H.R. 1280 was reintroduced on Feb 24, 2021, and passed on Mar 3, 2021 (GovTrack.us, 2022). The relentless fight by the bill's sponsor depicts the commitment to promote change in the police departments.

The vulnerable population addressed by the policy is minority populations. George Floyd was an African American man strangled by the police in about 8 minutes incident. Floyd's appeal, "I can't breathe," was ignored by the officer leading to his death even though he was unarmed (Okri, 2021). The occurrence was one of the many cases of police brutality towards the black due to the assumption that they were criminals. Bruce (2018) asserts that advocacy against discrimination is vital in promoting equality in society. Floyd's death depicted the inequality in America and the need to create policies that promote the integrity of the security sector. Suggested measures in the bill include restricting specific policing practices, improving transparency, identifying training on best practices, using body cameras and dashcams to record police operations, and adopting data collection to monitor police activities (Congres.Gov, 2020). Therefore, the bill was meant to

cushion harmless citizens, with minority populations targeted.

The sponsor of the bill target was to eradicate constitutional violations by the police. Critical aspects of the law include lowering the criminal intent standard (Congres.Gov, 2020). The officers with misconduct are to be subjected to federal prosecution. Additionally, a national registry with the offenses of the police was one of the suggestions in the bill. The goal was to hold all the police officers liable for their actions by eliminating the immunity they enjoyed (GovTrack.us, 2022). Another notable aspect of the law is establishing a framework that forbids racial profiling at all levels of the government. Equal treatment of all the citizens is vital in the bill.

Introduction

Social inequality is a significant problem globally. The disparity between the rich and the poor has caused suffering in the population. Similarly, power difference has caused oppression of the marginalized communities. The USA's key challenge includes racial inequality, wealth disparity, religious stereotyping, and gender discrimination. State and federal governments formulate diverse policies to address the systemic racism in the country. The research focuses on The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020 (H.R 7120). The legislation was meant to address ethnic profiling and brutality by the police. H.R 7120 was a hotly contested law, with the legislators divided across the political realignment. The politicians' decision to take sides depicts the existing

division in America attributed to race superiority. Hence, exploration of the policy and how social workers can assist in promoting equality is key to improving the well-being of the population.

The specific vulnerable populations the policy advocates for are racial minorities. George Floyd was an African American man who was murdered by the police. The incident is one of the many cases that depict systemic racism in the USA towards minority Groups. As a result, H.R 7120 was proposed to streamline the police department by making the officers accountable and prohibiting racial or religious profiling. According to Bruce (2018), the main focus of policy advocacy is to improve the population's well-being. In this case, minority groups are the main focus due to the mistreatment by the police. Religious and racial discrimination is addressed by ensuring police are proficient in handling the labeling. Suggestions such as the use of body cameras and dashcams for cars were meant to enhance the officers' responsibility (GovTrack.us, 2022). Besides, alternative policing is enhanced by developing community-based organizations to address the policing needs. Accountability and transparency strengthen collaboration between the police and the citizens.

On the other hand, the patterns of participation were divided among the Democrats and the Republicans. The motive of the proponent, who was a Democrat, was to promote inclusivity and accountability in the police department. However, no Republican supported the bill

during the vote, showing that political affiliations were a significant issue in passing H.R 7120. Bruce (2018) indicates that policies can be executed in stages such as committee discussion, debates, and forwarding to the executive for approval. H.R 7120 was proposed by Karen Bass, then presented to the committee before being discussed in Congress, and finally was submitted to Senate. However, the failure to pass in the Senate necessitated the reintroduction of the bill as H.R. 1280 in the 117th Congress (GovTrack.us, 2022). The process shows that policy deliberations are lengthy and involve heated debate between the proponents and opponents. The goal of both groups is to win the appeal of a specific population.

The purpose of the policy seeks to change is the mistreatment of the minority of the police. H.R. 7120 proposes training the police on the issue of racial and religious profiling to promote inclusivity (GovTrack.us, 2022). Likewise, measures such as community policing, collection of police misconduct data, and holding the officers accountable for their actions were meant to eradicate prejudice in police operations. Bruce (2018) demonstrates that protective policies protect vulnerable populations from abusive treatment. H.R. 7120 addresses the plight of African Americans who are victims of police brutality in the USA. A comprehensive collection of information assists in understanding the trends of police profiling and finding lasting solutions to the menace. The death of Floyd and other preceding incidences necessitated urgent reforms to protect African Americans and other minorities from profiling and

excessive use of force by the police (Okri, 2021). Thus, the policy's purpose was to fight the violation of human rights since all people deserve equal treatment from the police and other security agencies.

H.R 7120 is a written policy that addresses police discrimination in the USA. According to Bruce (2018), established rules and regulations are meant to govern the behavior and action of the staff. The proponents of H.R 7120 intention was to regulate police officers' practice and make them more accountable for their actions. The specific mention of racial and religious profiling demonstrates that the policy was meant to promote equal treatment of all citizens (GovTrack.us, 2022). H.R 7120 enactments were triggered by a series of incidences that led to the death of unarmed black people in the USA. The case of George Floyd activated anger that led to persistent demonstrations in the USA and later spread to other regions globally. The "Black Lives Matter" online and physical protests highlighted the need for tolerance and respect for African Americans in the USA. Bruce (2018) elaborates those social policies are enacted to address social problems. Hence, H.R 7120 motive was to establish a transparent and accountable policing system by eliminating profiling of individuals and excessive use of force.

Effective advocacy entails addressing the specific needs of the vulnerable population. Bruce (2018) asserts that social workers' commitment is vital in advocating for a specific policy. Fundamental approaches include allocating

enough time to engage diverse stakeholders on various community policies. Resilience is essential in ensuring the specific issue addressed is comprehensively covered. Consequently, policy advocacy should not have boundaries. Social workers have a role in empowering vulnerable communities across the globe. For example, the fight against police brutality and racism is not confined to the USA. The policy can be shared with other social workers across the globe to enhance the welfare of marginalized populations. Bruce (2018) affirms that effective social work advocacy entails developing a vision to address issues such as inequality, discrimination, and racism. H.R 7120 is appropriate in addressing the persistent issue of racism and police brutality. Pragmatism and consistency are key to addressing obstacles and uncertainties in the policy being advocated for in the community.

H.R 7120 impact varies in the macro, micro, and mezzo levels of advocacy. Bruce (2018) asserts that micro-level advocacy addresses the specific needs of individuals or families to promote their well-being (49). H.R 7120 Act is a relief to African American families who are worried for the safety of their kids. The profiling by the police has led to injuring, sentencing, and killing of unarmed and innocent individuals. Consequently, on the mezzo level, the community needs are addressed. Bruce (2018) demonstrates that mezzo-level advocacy involves community-based agencies to improve the population's welfare in a given environment. H.R 7120 has a provision of empowerment of communities to promote equitable policing. The initiative

will assist in addressing issues such as excessive police presence in Black neighborhoods and mistreatment of people of color by the police. Furthermore, Bruce (2018) articulates that the macro-level advocacy addresses dysfunctional policies on local, federal, and state governmental levels. The goal of macro-level intervention is to protect vulnerable populations from skewed policies. In this case, H.R 7120 offers a solution to excessive use of force by the police and profiling of minority groups (Congres.Gov, 2020). Hence, the regulation addresses the concerns of the marginalized individuals and the overall favoritism of the existing laws.

Framework

The social movements triggered the police reforms to address profiling and brutality. Grant-Panting (2021) indicates that the murder of Floyd prompted nationwide protest, with the citizens advocating for defunding the police. The situation forced the legislators to discuss the issue and propose policies to protect African Americans and other vulnerable groups. Bruce (2018) indicates legislative policies are based on enacting specific laws to address an issue in a given region or countrywide. The persistence of police profiling and excessive force necessitated alteration of the existing policing laws to address the racial profiling aspect. H.R 7120 proponents believed that altering the policing laws was key to enhancing transparency and accountability (Congres.Gov, 2020). The discussion in Congress and subsequent engagement in the Senate depicts that political goodwill is key to passing the law. The style of policy

practice started with mass protests which created an urgency to have legislation cushion vulnerable citizens.

The policy practice is based on ecological and ecological frameworks. Bruce (2018) indicates that the ecological framework guiding principle is that "social workers who wish to help their clients have a professional duty to try to reform those factors that cause or exacerbate their clients' problems" (91). The role of the social workers is to scan the environment and identify the shortcoming of current policies and introduce new ones to address the challenges faced by the population. For instance, police brutality and racial profiling are consistent issues in the USA due to the lack of accountability and the immunity the police enjoy (Grant-Panting, 2021). The introduction of H.R 7120 was meant to seal the loopholes that allowed the police to use excessive force without any accountability. Consequently, integration of the communities in the policing initiative enables them to voice their concerns. Community involvement in policing is key to ensuring the specific needs of a given population are addressed (Congres.Gov, 2020). For instance, in case of constant harassment, the community members can raise complaints and discuss with the police and other security agencies. Bruce (2018) confirms that professionals have to engage in policy advocacy to improve population welfare. Failure to engage in discussions and proposals is unethical because it allows the perpetrators of discrimination to continue with their iniquities.

Social workers and policymakers have the role of voicing the concerns of vulnerable populations. Bruce (2018) demonstrates that social workers are responsible for pushing for the community's needs. Engagement with diverse stakeholders such as legislators, government officials, and communities is essential in addressing the community's needs. Ruiz-Fernández et al. (2021) expound that social workers are responsible for highlighting the needs of the vulnerable population. The direct engagement with individuals, families, and communities enables them to understand the community's needs. Service to individuals, families, and community is an important principle in social practice. Bruce (2018) elaborates that social workers have the role of shaping the world by utilizing their professional skills to address the community's needs. Professional skills are crucial to ensuring inequalities in a given environment are addressed and lasting solutions established.

Furthermore, social workers' participation in public arenas enables them to engage the government on issues that affect marginalized populations. According to Bruce (2018), the four interlocking rationales in policy advocacy are analysis, values, electoral politics, and politics. The revelation depicts that addressing issues such as police brutality necessities extensive lobbying to address the underlying causes. Therefore, identifying the ethical rationale for addressing the specific aspect is essential in agitating for change. Bruce (2018) explains that research rationale allows social workers to collect data, analyze the information, and suggest ways to improve the issue. In this case, police

brutality can be effectively handled by obtaining data on incidences and their impact on the individuals and the marginalized populations. The success of the advocacy entails involving like-minded legislators to push for the change in the laws. Thus, the collaboration between social workers and policymakers is key to triggering and sustaining change.

Skills Needed

Competence is essential in policy advocacy. Jansson (2018) asserts that analytical, political, ethical reasoning and interactional skills are needed in policy advocacy. Social workers have to be analytical in collecting and analyzing information supporting policy needs. According to Colnar and Dimovski (2020), evidence-based policies are important in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations. As a result, a social worker should be a good researcher because analyzing a situation and collecting appropriate information is instrumental in convincing the policymakers to enact given legislation. The enactment of H.R 7120 depends on valid data that can be used to persuade the Senate and president to ratify the law. Consequently, political competencies enable experts to evaluate the viability of the policy and identify appropriate political resources to support the realization of proposed interventions. Friedman et al. (2021) explain that collaboration between social workers and politicians is essential in enacting inclusive laws. The case of H.R 7120 depicts the importance of lobbying for political support to address existing inequalities.

Consequently, effective communication is key to building strong networks to lobby for community needs. Jansson (2018) demonstrates that teamwork with other professionals and relevant stakeholders is instrumental in accelerating change in the community. Articulating issues and convincing others to join the course is key to uplifting and protecting vulnerable populations. H.R 7120 legislation requires input from experts, the community, legislators, and activists. The ability to engage and negotiate with proponents and opponents of the law is key to protecting the vulnerable population (Emma & Montgomery, 2019). Diplomacy and mediation skills are instrumental in promoting policy advocacy. Lastly, the value clarification skills assist in evaluating the policies to establish if they promote social justice, enhance economic equality, and protect the client's autonomy (Jansson, 2018). Social work ethical principles are valuable in ensuring the needs of the vulnerable population is addressed. Thus, policy development requires competent social workers who can articulate the issues and convince all the stakeholders of the benefits of enacting a given policy.

Challenges are inevitable when implementing social policies. Jansson (2018) asserts that opposition and time constraints are significant challenges. The opponents can derail the process of changing new policies or manage to foil the whole process. Knowledge of potential obstacles is beneficial in establishing ways to sustain the policy advocacy process. A case illustration is the Republicans' failure to support H.R 7120. The total objection shows that social workers have to work hard to convince policymakers of the

need to implement a given framework. Jansson (2018) demonstrates that broad-mindedness is essential in overcoming the obstacles associated with policy transformation. For example, policymakers can use online resources or library material to establish ways to accelerate the program. Details on government databases are beneficial in understanding how specific issue such as racism was addressed in the past. Jansson (2018) explains that time commitment is essential in promoting favorable social policies. Commitment within the agencies and other facets of life are necessary for ensuring the oppressed individuals' needs are addressed. Kotera et al. (2021) confirm that resilience is important in social work practice. The ability to overcome challenges is paramount in realizing the set goals.

Social Worker's Role in H.R 7120

Social workers play a vital role in policy advocacy. Jansson (2018) states that social workers play a central role in social reform to fight racism, economic inequality, and other vices. In the case of H.R 7120, it plays an essential role in enlightening the community on the need for the rule and taking their opinions on the same. The engagement with the individuals, families, and organizations enables the social workers to propose more inclusive policies. Jansson (2018) elaborates that improving social conditions is vital for social workers. The experts have to identify the suffering population and assist them or link with the agencies that can address their unique needs. Cultural competence is central in agitating for inclusive policies to address the specific needs

of vulnerable populations. For that reason, expanding the opportunities for marginalized groups is an important role of the social workers. Also, the experts have a role in voicing the sufferings of the population and preventing the explanations, dominations, and discriminations. Friedman et al. (2021) affirm that social workers are tasked with helping the vulnerable population through advocacy and other forms of support. For example, engagement with the victims of police brutality enables the social workers to highlight the need for ratifying H.R 7120. Thus, social workers have a role in collecting opinions from the community and advocating for fairness and social justice.

Social workers' responsibility in Policy advocacy is expected at the micro and macro levels. Jansson (2018) indicates that the association with clients and their families is key to discharging social work services. The relationship is guided by the ethical standards that govern the profession. According to NASW, integrity, competence, service, social justice, human relationship, and dignity of the clients are central ethical considerations. During the H.R 7120 formulation and implementation, social workers can work directly to get the views of African Americans and enlighten them of the proposals. The association is instrumental in promoting inclusivity. The information collected will be utilized to advocate for the improved well-being of the population.

Further, the organization's and communities level of engagement assists in creating a lasting impact. Jansson

(2018) shows that mezzo-level responsibilities are key in creating safe communities. Social workers can engage marginalized groups and present their grievances to the legislators. Similarly, they can report cases of segregation based on race, religion, sex, age, and disability as required by the Act. Likewise, local, state, and federal legislators' engagements are based on the research and information obtained from the micro and mezzo levels. Social workers can push the legislators to enact rules that protect the vulnerable (Pawar, 2019). The advocacy can be executed through negotiations and other diplomatic engagements. However, in the case of resistance, participation in social movements is essential in amplifying the voice of the vulnerable. Peaceful protests in the cities and online protests on social media platforms help create awareness. The case of George Floyd's death and subsequent outcry globally shows that engagement in social movements effectively accelerates policy changes (Okri, 2021). Thus, social workers' role in policy advocacy includes collecting grievances from the community, presenting the information to organizations and governments, and lobbying for change.

Conclusion

H.R 7120 was passed by Congress and submitted to Senate, awaiting approval. The proponents envision a streamlined police system that is transparent, accountable, and operates with integrity. The Act aims to protect vulnerable populations such as African Americans from police brutality. The proposal and the debate of H.R 7120

were triggered by the murder of Floyd and other African Americans. Social workers participating in the micro, mezzo, and macro levels is essential in ensuring H.R 7120 is enacted. For instance, direct petitioning with the Senate and the president will assist in passing the law. Consequently, they can suggest more adjustments that can be integrated during the rule's amendments or other acts that address police brutality. Policy-enactment task is essential because the Senate has not yet ratified the bill Congress submitted. As a result, social workers should engage both the Democrats and Republicans and persuade them to pass the bill. The involvement will assist in creating an inclusive and safe America for all. Enactment of H.R 7120 is essential in promoting accountability of police officers, reporting discrimination cases, and enhancing collaboration with local communities.

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