

New Bedford branch of NAACP urges House members to approve police accountability bill

“If we are not going to tolerate police abuses, if we’re not going to accept racism in the ranks of law enforcement; if we are to end the targeting of people-of-color by law enforcement; if we are truly committed to creating a culture and environment of racial equality in our Commonwealth, then the Massachusetts legislature must pass the Police Accountability Bill,” said LaSella Hall, President of the NAACP New Bedford Branch. The Senate version of the bill, S 2800, passed with an overwhelming majority. The legislation now moves to the House.

“It’s rare for legislators to have the opportunity to pass civil rights legislation. History has shown that these opportunities don’t come often. We urge all House members to examine their consciences and think of the many lives lost, the many families devastated, by police violence, and take a stand against violence and racism today,” added President Hall.

A week ago the NAACP released a list of demands to of New Bedford City Mayor John Mitchell, Police Chief Joseph Cordeiro, and District Attorney Thomas Quinn III. Many of these demands, including creating Community Review Boards, outlawing choke holds and neck holds, in addition to many other protections, would be satisfied by the Police Accountability Bill. The organization worked closely with Senator Montigny to help craft and advance the bill, helping to include the voices of communities-of-color in the legislative effort.

Senator Montigny, in a statement, said, "We cannot deny that structural racism and inequality is deeply rooted within society, and we must take serious measures to begin to eradicate these pervasive problems."

As the earlier NAACP statement read: "The horrific death of George Floyd and, more recently, the deliberate shooting of Rayshard Brooks in Atlanta along with Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and other Black citizens too numerous to name, has increased the number of lives lost to state-sanctioned violence and white supremacy. These incidents are becoming all too common. Enough is enough!"