

March 15, 2019

Dear Representative:

The undersigned criminal justice, human rights, faith-based, and government accountability organizations write in support of the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act H.R.1714. **We urge you to cosponsor this important bipartisan legislation that would reform the 1033 program.**

The 1033 program enables the Department of Defense (DOD) to transfer surplus military equipment to federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement. Since 1991, the Pentagon has transferred \$6 billion in equipment. Various law enforcement agencies, including those charged with immigration enforcement and school policing, are eligible for weapons transfers. The 1033 program has supplied Department of Homeland Security agencies on the southern border with military equipment. School districts across the country have also been policed with military weapons under the 1033 program. These weapons of war do not belong in our neighborhoods. Rather than improving safety, the militarization of police forces terrorizes communities—particularly lower-income populations and people of color—and increases the risk of excessive force. The impact has been to divide communities and foster deeper mistrust and frustration, as well as stymie civic engagement when protestors are met with a militarized response.

Mismanagement has plagued the 1033 program over the last ten years. Military grade weapons have been sent with little or no accountability to local communities. Reports of missing equipment and inappropriate transfers prompted a moratorium on the program from May 2012 through October 2013. Missing weapons and a failure to comply with guidelines also led to the suspension of three entire states and 146 individual law enforcement agencies from the 1033 program by 2014. In 2017, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) created a fake law enforcement agency and was able to obtain \$1.2 million worth of military gear through the 1033 program. GAO also issued a report on the 1033 program and recommended increased oversight and regulation of the program.

The Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act H.R.1714 would:

**1. Prohibit the transfer of military weapons and equipment that are unnecessary and inappropriate for local policing.** Prohibited items would include grenades, mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicles (MRAPs), armored or weaponized drones, combat configured aircraft, silencers, and long range acoustic devices (LRADs). This bill would also prohibit the future transfer of items that are currently banned from the 1033 program.

**2. Eliminate incentives for the inappropriate use of military weapons and equipment.** Law enforcement agencies would be required to have training and community approval before participating in the 1033 program. Law enforcement agencies would also have to indicate how they plan to use 1033 property.

**3. Require oversight and transparency of the 1033 program.** Annual reporting from the Department of Defense to Congress would be required. All controlled equipment transferred must be accounted for and DOD must make details of 1033 transfers publicly available.

The 1033 program needs reform. We urge you to co-sponsor the Stop Militarizing Law Enforcement Act.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Baptists  
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
American Friends Service Committee  
Amnesty International USA  
Conference of Superiors of Men (Catholic)  
Church of Scientology National Affairs Office  
Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy  
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces  
Drug Policy Alliance  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Ecumenical Poverty Initiative  
Franciscan Action Network  
Government Information Watch  
Human Rights Watch  
Indivisible  
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office  
Million Hoodies Movement for Justice  
Muslim Public Affairs Council  
NAACP  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Council of Churches  
National Immigration Project  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
Open the Government  
Pax Christi USA  
South East Asian Faith Initiatives

The American Humanist Association

The Friends Committee on National Legislation

The United Methodist Church - General Board of Church and Society

T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights

Unitarian Universalist Association

United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries

Win Without War