



June 23, 2020

To all elected officials and candidates for office,

In the midst of an historic uprising, led by Black people and triggered by outrage over the latest police killings of Black people—George Floyd, Breonna Talyor, Tony McDade, and too many others—we are all called to re-examine our relationship with and engagement in the institutions and systems that perpetuate the devaluation of Black life in the U.S.

One such set of institutions includes police associations and fraternal organizations, such as the Fraternal Order of Police. Police associations like the FOP present one of the biggest barriers toward holding police accountable for violence against our communities. These organizations abuse their power and far too often defend racist practices, wield their tremendous political influence to avoid accountability for misconduct, and use their resources to protect and defend the worst abusers among police departments across the country.¹

That's why, going forward, **MoveOn Political Action will consider a candidate's stance on accepting campaign donations from police associations as a substantial strike against gaining our endorsement.** Candidates who continue to take cash and support from these organizations will have clearly signaled that they are on the wrong side of this historic fight for justice.

Furthermore, we call on all elected officials and candidates for office, including any candidates who are seeking or have received MoveOn members' endorsement, to take the following steps:

- [Sign the pledge hosted by our partners at Color Of Change PAC](#) to reject political donations from the Fraternal Order of Police.
- Redirect or reinvest any political contributions that you've received from police associations in recent cycles by donating them to Black-led social justice initiatives.
- Encourage your fellow elected officials and candidates to do the same.

Here are just a few of many examples of how the FOP and police associations abuse their power: After the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, Bob Kroll, head of the Minneapolis Police Federation, called Floyd a "violent criminal" and referred to those protesting his killing as "terrorists."² Chicago's Fraternal Order of Police fumed over accountability for the officer who killed Laquan

¹ "The Problem With Police Unions," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 10, 2020
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-problem-with-police-unions-11591830984>

² "Calls For Reform Put Minneapolis Police Union Leader In Hot Seat," NPR, June 13, 2020
<https://www.npr.org/2020/06/13/876640607/calls-for-reform-put-minneapolis-police-union-leader-in-hot-seat>

Paid for by MoveOn.org Political Action, pol.moveon.org, not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

McDonald and the accomplices who helped cover it up.³ After the police murder of Philando Castile in Minnesota, St. Paul Police Federation President David Titus leapt to defend police from critiques of racism, rather than condemn the killing.⁴ In Cleveland, the police association went to court to appeal the firing of the officer responsible for shooting 12-year-old Tamir Rice to death.⁵ Recently, the Sergeant's Benevolent Association in New York City doxxed (publicly shared the personal information of) the mayor's Black daughter after she was arrested during protests against police violence.⁶

Along with their direct interventions in cases of police violence, each election cycle, police associations donate generously to candidates across the country, all the way from the president to local city council seats.

A large portion of that money is given to Democrats. Senators Amy Klobuchar and Chris Coons and Democratic Majority Leader Steny Hoyer are just a few of the high-profile Democrats whose campaigns or affiliated PACs have accepted money from police associations.⁷

It's time to get that money and influence out of our politics. From oil to tobacco to pharmaceuticals to guns, we know how much sway donations can have—and we know the impact it can have when politicians reject money, both in the message it sends and in the way it breaks the grip of powerful interests.

MoveOn members will back our demands with action: We'll drive constituent calls, run paid ads, and engage in other tactics to demand that Democrats reinvest donations from police associations, and we'll lift up the candidates endorsed by MoveOn who have not accepted such funds and publicly commit to this pledge.

Elected officials and candidates for office have the responsibility to demonstrate that they are willing to hold police accountable and keep our communities safe. This starts with rejecting campaign contributions and support from the very organizations established and determined to avoid police accountability.

–Rahna Epting
Executive Director, MoveOn Political Action

³ "4 Chicago police officers fired over alleged cover-up of Laquan McDonald shooting," ABC News, July 19, 2019 <https://abcnews.go.com/US/chicago-police-officers-fired-alleged-cover-laquan-mcdonald/story?id=64433067>

⁴ "Philando Castile shooting: police union hits back at governor's racism accusation," *The Guardian*, July 7, 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jul/07/philando-castile-shooting-police-union-governor-racism>

⁵ "Police union appeals Cleveland firing officer who killed Tamir Rice," *The Columbus Dispatch*, January 15, 2020 <https://www.dispatch.com/news/20200115/police-union-appeals-cleveland-firing-officer-who-killed-tamir-rice>

⁶ "Police Union Discloses Arrest of de Blasio's Daughter in Privacy Breach," *The New York Times*, June 1, 2020 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/01/nyregion/chiara-de-blasio-arrest.html>

⁷ "Amid calls for police reform, new dataset shows where police money has flowed in Congress," Open Secrets, June 5, 2020 <https://www.opensecrets.org/news/2020/06/police-reform-new-dataset-shows-where-police-money-has-flowed-in-congress/>