

IACP Statement on Qualified Immunity

As police executives, community members, and elected officials seek to transform the policing profession, there are several areas of agreement where the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) believes we can and should work in unison to recommend and develop meaningful solutions. This includes, but is not limited to, use-of-force policies, training and education standards, early warning systems, disciplinary procedures, and hiring practices,

However, the IACP is gravely concerned by and fervently opposed to efforts to change the qualified immunity protections for police officers. Qualified immunity is a foundational protection for the policing profession and any modification to this legal standard will have a devastating impact on the police's ability to fulfill its public safety mission.

What is qualified immunity? Qualified immunity provides police officers with protection from civil lawsuits so long as their conduct does not violate clearly established law or constitutional rights of which a reasonable officer would have known. Further, qualified immunity **does not** prevent individuals from recovering damages from police officers who **knowingly** violate an individual's constitutional rights.

Qualified immunity is an essential part of policing and American jurisprudence. It allows police officers to respond to incidents without pause, make split-second decisions, and rely on the current state of the law in making those decisions. This protection is essential because it ensures officers that good faith actions, based on their understanding of the law at the time of the action, will not later be found to be unconstitutional. The loss of this protection would have a profoundly chilling effect on police officers and limit their ability and willingness to respond to critical incidents without hesitation.

Calls to limit, reduce, or eliminate qualified immunity do not represent a constructive path forward. In fact, these efforts would most certainly have a far-reaching, deleterious effect on the policing profession's ability to serve and protect communities.