

Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act (LETIA) of 2021

SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

The lack of uniform, nationwide standards for law enforcement – including with regard to the use of force – and standardized national data on law enforcement practices are major barriers in addressing the issue of misconduct. While respecting state and local authority, the federal government can play a role in developing effective standards in collaboration with stakeholders, facilitating data collection and review, and incentivizing local departments to adopt national standards. As Attorney General Garland’s Justice Department recommences federal investigations into pattern-and-practice violations of Constitutional rights by state and local police departments, Congress should also provide adequate resources for this purpose.

The Law Enforcement Trust and Integrity Act would address the problem of police misconduct through the following actions:

- Requiring the Attorney General to work with stakeholders to analyze existing law enforcement accreditation standards; recommend areas for the adoption of new standards to improve accountability and move toward a guardian mentality, including standards with regard to use of force policies, stop and search procedures, and other areas prone to misconduct; and to work with stakeholders and make grants available to encourage the uniform adoption of such standards by local police departments.
- Authorizing grants to state and local governments, public and private entities, and consortia to study law enforcement agency management and operations or develop pilot programs to implement best practices.
- Requiring the Attorney General to study the prevalence and impact of any law, rule, or procedure that allows a law enforcement officer to delay for an unreasonable or arbitrary period of time answering questions posed by a local internal affairs officer, prosecutor, or review board.
- Authorizing \$25 million for the enforcement of civil rights statutes regarding police misconduct, including compliance with consent decree or judgments.
- Requiring the Department of Justice to establish a task force to coordinate the investigation, prosecution, and enforcement efforts of federal, state and local governments in cases related to law enforcement misconduct.
- Creating standardized requirements for federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to report data on certain activities including use of deadly force to the Attorney General.
- Establishing a new process for recognizing law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.