**Police Training and Independent Review Act** Application

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**Background:** On average, police in the United States shoot and kill more than [1,000 people](https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/investigations/police-shootings-database/) every year. Despite staggering rates of fatal on-duty shootings, low conviction rates highlight the challenges in holding police officers accountable. Factors such as close relationships between local prosecutors and police departments can hinder independent investigations and impact the pursuit of charges and convictions.

To combat the challenges in holding police officers accountable, *the Police Training and Independent Review Act* would provide grants for States that require fair and impartial police training for their law enforcement officers and would incentivize States to enact laws requiring the independent investigation and prosecution of the use of deadly force by law enforcement officers. Last Congress, the House-passed George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021 included this bill’s provisions to promote independent investigations into police-involved use of deadly force.

The use of independent prosecutors eliminates the inherent conflict of interest that arises when local prosecutors are asked to investigate, and potentially prosecute, the same local police departments with whom they work so closely on a daily basis. The introduction of the *Police Training and Independent Review Act* this Congress follows the fatal shooting of Sonya Massey in her home near Springfield, Illinois by the sheriff’s deputy she called for help. The body worn camera footage of this horrible incident emphasizes a clear need for crisis intervention and de-escalation tactics among law enforcement officers, and the speedy referral to a separate state’s attorney’s office demonstrates the effectiveness of mandating objective, independent prosecutors to hold law enforcement officers accountable when there is a police-involved use of deadly force. Sonya Massey’s death is inexcusable and should not reflect the values or training of law enforcement officials.

*Representative Steve Cohen (TN-09) is leading a companion bill in the House.*

**Bill Summary**: *the Police Training and Independent Review Act* would:

1. Create a financial incentive by authorizing the U.S. Attorney General to award grants for States that require training for law enforcement officials on fair and impartial policing, crisis intervention, de-escalation tactics as well as best practices for working with members of the community with disabilities or mental health conditions; and
2. Encourage communities to use independent prosecutors to investigate law enforcement officials’ use of deadly force by authorizing the U.S. Attorney General to award grants to States that require an independent investigation and, if warranted, prosecution in cases where one or more of the alleged offenses result in death or serious bodily harm.