

Democrats propose sweeping police overhaul

President Trump opposes move

By LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats proposed a far-reaching overhaul of police procedures and accountability Monday, a sweeping legislative response to the mass protests denouncing the deaths of black Americans in the hands of law enforcement.

The political outlook is deeply uncertain for the legislation in a polarized election year. President Donald Trump is staking out a tough “law and order” approach in the face of the outpouring of demonstrations and demands to reimagine policing in America.

“We cannot settle for anything less than transformative structural change,” said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, drawing on the nation’s history of slavery.

Before unveiling the package, House and Senate Democrats held a moment of silence at the Capitol’s Emancipation Hall, reading the names of George Floyd and many others killed during police interactions. They knelt for 8 minutes and 46 seconds — now a symbol of police brutality and violence — the length of time prosecutors say Floyd was pinned under a white police officer’s knee before he died.

Trump, who met with law enforcement officials at the White House, characterized the Democrats as having “gone CRAZY!”

As activists call for restructuring police departments and even to “defund the police,” the president tweeted, “LAW & ORDER, NOT DEFUND AND ABOLISH THE POLICE.”

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House Speaker
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Democratic leaders pushed back, saying their proposal would not eliminate police departments — a decision for cities and states — but establish new oversight.

Joe Biden, the presumed Democratic presidential nominee, “does not believe that police should be defunded,” said spokesman Andrew Bates.

The Justice in Policing Act

would limit legal protections for police, create a national database of excessive-force incidents and ban police chokeholds, among other changes, the most ambitious law enforcement reforms sought by Congress in years.

The legislation would revise the federal criminal police misconduct statute to make it easier to prosecute officers who are involved in misconduct “knowingly or with reckless disregard.”

The package would also change “qualified immunity” protections for police to more broadly enable damage claims in lawsuits.

The legislation would seek to provide greater transparency of police behavior in several ways. For one, it would grant subpoena power to the Justice Department to conduct pattern and practice investigations of potential misconduct and help states conduct independent investigations. It would ban racial profiling, boost requirements for police body cameras and limit the transfer of military equipment to local jurisdictions.

And it would create a National Police Misconduct Registry, a database to try to prevent officers from transferring from one department to another with past misconduct undetected, the draft says.

A long-sought federal anti-lynching bill that has stalled in Congress is included in the package.

Fish shop: ‘It was like a ghost town’

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“I come by here a lot, because I think it’s a beautiful place, and it’s just been quiet all winter,” Breur said. “I thought it was eerie how desolate it was. It was always such a lively place. So I came home and I talked to her about it and said, ‘Well, maybe we should open it up again, because summer is coming.’ That was before the pandemic, of course.”

Breur signed a lease with the Port, which offered him a discount rate until he could open up amid government restrictions on restaurants meant to stem the spread of the virus. Thinking he’d have most of the summer to prepare, Breur instead had a soft opening late last month when restaurants were allowed to resume seated dining.

Cordero, who went to work at El Tapatio Mexican Restaurant after NW Wild Products closed, said she was laid off because of virus restrictions and started advising Breur on how to restart her old seafood shop.

“It was just sad,” she said. “It was like a ghost town down here when it wasn’t here.”

The shop, a small slot of a storefront in the Chinook Building with room for one table, operates like a to-go window. It depends on several tables spread out across the boardwalk, overlooking a sea of pleasure craft and commercial boats at the marina. The area features panoramic views of the Port, Columbia River and Astoria Bridge.

Breur offers the usual lineup of fish and chips, melts, chowders, sandwiches, crab platters, clams and oysters. Inside is the same case of fresh seafood and exotic meats NW Wild Products had been known to stock. Breur added a few Dutch specialties, such as croquettes, sauerkraut mashed potatoes and pea soup.

“I moved here five years ago,” Breur said. “I’m a born American, but I was raised over in Holland, and I worked in ... different service industries over there, amongst others fish. My parents — my mother specifically — comes from a town called Den Helder, which is a fishing city.”

Next door, the Port is deconstructing the former Seafare Restaurant, a landmark between the Chinook Building and the Astoria Riverwalk Inn that had long been vacant and deteriorating. The agency is contemplating a deck at the site, with a collection of food carts overlooking the marina.

Breur, a musician, hopes to start playing music on the docks. Cordero said the shop’s side business — cleaning, packing and shipping salmon caught by recreational fishermen coming into the marina — has been slowed by coronavirus restrictions.



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Amanda Cordero and Roy Breur have reopened the former NW Wild Products as Port of Astoria Marina Seafood Market.



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Port of Astoria Marina Seafood Market offers traditional fare like calamari baskets, left, and Dutch specialties such as croquettes.

Cordero said the docks at the Port seemed empty after Neva moved downtown.

“It’s going to be weird, but we all get along,” Cordero said of running a fish shop in competition

with her ex-husband. “We’re all on the same page. He knows that we’re here. He’s helped us. In fact, he sold us some of his equipment. We’re all going to help each other. There’s no animosity.”

Falcon Cove: Board’s actions drew criticism

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Cove Beach and Falcon Cove, an unincorporated area on the border of Clatsop and Tillamook counties, than previously estimated.

“So those three things coupled together informed the board that we really had a serious problem in terms of being able to supply water dependably and reliably to not only the existing number of homeowners, but certainly not to what was starting to appear on the horizon as future needs,” Dice said.

He said the board could not in “good conscience” give water availability letters to property owners looking to obtain building permits from Clatsop County.

“And the only legal solution to say ‘no’ was to declare a moratorium. So that is why it was an emergency,” Dice said.

The board’s actions drew criticism about transparency and possible ulterior motives to limit development, since property owners were left to find other sources of water to obtain building permits.

Guido Paparoni, a geologist, and his wife, Margaret Rozendaal, a climate scientist, are property owners in Cove Beach. They spent months analyzing data obtained through public records requests and came to the conclusion that there is no drought or water shortage in the late summer months.

David Livermore, a hydrogeologist and longtime homeowner in Cove Beach, came to the same conclusions. They shared their findings with the water district and the county last year.

Dice walked back claims of a water shortage in December after he said the water district discovered an obstruction in its well that led to false data. But as the moratorium continued and the board moved toward another six-month extension, more property owners became involved and there were warning signs of legal action.

Beth Radich, the board’s president, commended Dice on Saturday for driving the process. She said the goal is to provide people who live in the community access to safe, secure, dependable and affordable water.

“That’s a critical and essential need for residents. It’s also incredibly important for people who have vacation homes here or have lots to sell. And we consider all of that,” she said.

“We get responsibility for the entire community. We carefully consider the impact to everyone. And we want you to know that the decision to enact the moratorium was predicated on data and experience. And we had a lot of communication and meetings with the community. We engaged with our agency partners, and we got great technical advice and guidance from many other organizations.”

County Commissioner Lianne Thompson cautioned the board during a meeting in May to listen to property owners after saying the water district was at risk for lawsuits and ethics complaints. Thompson expressed the same enthusiasm Saturday about the board’s decision to lift the moratorium as many other property owners and homeowners.

“Well done. And I say well done on everyone’s part because, yes, the water board members have worked on this. Other community members have worked on this, as well,” she said.

“And it’s important that we honor and that we welcome the way you welcomed us today to participate in this process. I think there’s been a lot of good work that’s been done. I think there has also been an unfortunate strain of, I would say defensiveness and hostility if anyone had a question or a disagreement or raised concerns. Those weren’t necessarily welcome. I would again plead with the members of the water board to welcome those differences of opinion.”

Paparoni, whose research and reports challenged the water district’s data, said in an email that he believes there is an opportunity for state legislators to review how public districts are regulated so that a similar situation does not happen again.

“That, however, is in the hands of our public officials, and I hope they will take action in the near future,” he said.

Frederick: ‘We just live in an amazing place’

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But the views once you reach the top?

“Oh, my gosh,” she said. “Each time I get to one, I say, ‘This is the best view I’ve ever seen.’ There’s peaks that have names and peaks that have numbers. I’ve been trying to see all the peaks that have names. The group I go with takes the coordinates, and we’ve been naming peaks after each one of our dogs. We just named one ‘Zoey Peak.’ It’s like being in a foreign country.”

Frederick’s personal running companion and protector is her dog, Pearl.

“She’s a beast,” with unlimited endurance, Frederick said. “She’s 2 1/2, and I started running with her when she was probably too young to be running, but she can go and go and go. You’d think she would just drop when she gets home, but she still has energy.”

In addition to Pearl, Frederick usually runs or walks the trails with an informal group of fellow trail-travelers who have the same passion. Most join the group through Frederick’s Facebook page, “Just Run Bike Swim Astoria.”

“It’s a group I started nine or 10 years ago. I was trying to find people who did the same sort of things. There’s a lot of followers now, with a core group of 10 or 20. Sometimes you don’t want to go by yourself.

“A bunch of us have been meeting at Fort George every Tuesday for nine years. We go out and run, then meet. Fort George made some great shirts for us.”

Frederick teaches third grade at Lewis and Clark Elementary School, and with the coronavirus restrictions, “it’s really different right now. My stress level is high, just because I like to teach and be in front of the kids. It’s been really challenging.”

With conditions gradually getting back to normal, she said, “I have been noticing lately there

are a lot more cars parked at the trailheads. There’s more people walking. I’m glad everyone’s getting out, that’s awesome. I just hope it doesn’t get too crazy.”

A former runner in high school who ran events like the 400 and 800 meters, Frederick discovered distance events and hasn’t looked back.

“When I was little I saw something about the Hawaiian Ironman on TV. My whole life has been knowing that there’s all these things out there that you can do, and I’m kind of intrigued with endurance. I really admire those people.”

Frederick has run marathons and ultramarathons, even a 50K.

“At times I’ve been obsessed with cycling, then running, or on water. I like swimming in open water.”

Her latest obsession is the remote trails.

“I do not like to go on trails that are maintained or that the public uses. I’m really independent. I take Pearl everywhere with me, and I don’t take her anywhere if she has to be on leash.”

Above her house, she said, “there are literally miles of trails. I’ve been exploring and biking there for about three years, and every single time I think I’ve got it covered, I find another trail.”

In fact, Frederick could probably write a book on the undiscovered country.

“Every trail I’m on is my favorite. I really do love them all. I call them things like the ‘salal trail,’ the ‘really muddy trail,’ the ‘spooky trail’ or the ‘fun trail.’”

Running around a track or on a road? That wouldn’t be exciting enough for Frederick.

“I don’t like being on a treadmill or in a gym or the pool,” she said. “One thing just leads to another, and right now I’m stuck on this peak obsession.”

And she likes to keep it all in-county. There’s something for everyone.

“We just live in an amazing place,” she said.