

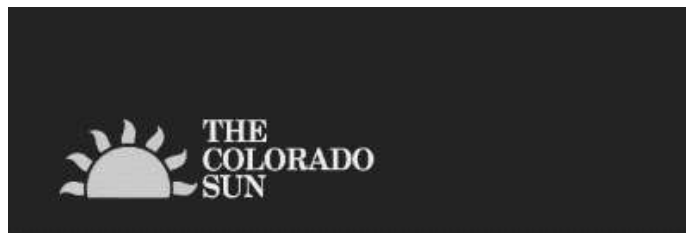
**G**ov. Jared Polis on Friday signed Colorado's sweeping police accountability bill, passed in the wake of George Floyd's death, into law, calling it a necessary and positive step toward healing the state's pain and hearing the public's concerns.

**Senate Bill 217** was introduced and passed in a matter of two weeks after being introduced in the days after Floyd's May 25 death at the hands of police officers in Minnesota and as Denver and cities across the nation were being rocked by protests in response.

"This is a long overdue moment of national reflection," Polis said just before he signed the measure at a ceremony in the Colorado Capitol. "This is a meaningful, substantial reform bill."

Polis said the bill contains "landmark, evidence-based" changes that he hopes will help build trust between communities and law enforcement. But he said that more work must still be done.

**Colorado is one of the first states to take legislative action** in the wake of Floyd's death and demonstrations across the nation.



Also in attendance at the bill signing were Democratic and Republican state lawmakers who worked on the legislation, as well as law enforcement officers and the family and friends of Coloradans killed at the hands of police.

The governor planned the bill signing for Juneteenth, which commemorates June 19, 1865, the day slaves in Galveston, Texas, learned they were free. It was more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln had signed the

Emancipation Proclamation and about two months after Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at the end of the Civil War.

Here are some of the most important parts of the legislation:



Colorado Gov. Jared Polis speaks moments before signing Senate Bill 217, a sweeping police accountability bill, into law at the Colorado Capitol on Friday, June 19, 2020. (Jesse Paul, The Colorado Sun)

## The rules around using deadly force have been changed

Right now, Colorado law enforcement officers can use deadly force if they reasonably suspect that someone is a threat to themselves, other officers or the public.

Senate Bill 217 changes that standard to require that officers face an imminent threat before they use deadly force, a change lawmakers hope will remove some of the subjectivity from the decision-making process.

Under the new law, officers are also prohibited from using deadly physical force to apprehend a person who is suspected only of a minor or nonviolent offense. Law enforcement must also try to use nonviolent tactics before resorting to using deadly force.

Law officers must identify themselves as such and give clear warning that deadly force may be used “with sufficient time for the warning to be observed,” the new law states. Officers are exempt from the requirement if the warnings would place themselves or others at risk of death or injury.

“I want the people of Colorado to know: We heard your cry,” said Sen. Rhonda Fields, an Aurora Democrat and lead sponsor of the bill.

Finally, the law also changes Colorado’s so-called “fleeing felon law,” which allows officers to use deadly force to stop a person they suspect has used a weapon in a crime or is armed. Law enforcement will be allowed to use deadly force against a suspected fleeing felon only if there is an imminent threat the person using the weapon as part of their escape.

Law enforcement agencies must train their officers on the changes by Sept. 1.

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