

Minneapolis Burning

May 29, 2020

Minneapolis is up in smoke, after protests became rioting became looting became conflagrations became nightmare. At issue is the police killing of civilian George Floyd.

It was the biggest story in the news, this week, and you can see why. Watch the video of a white policeman with his knee on the neck of a black man, Mr. Floyd, as he pled for his life — as *bystanders* pled for his life.

It is harrowing.

Scott Adams notes that this became a race issue . . . in which everybody agrees that the police were in the wrong. The best kind of race issue?

Except it *shouldn't* be merely a race issue. It should also be an issue of accountability.

But without regard to any legal judgement, lawmakers in legislatures and citizens by petition can expressly repeal qualified immunity.

There are too many killings by police where the perpetrators face zero accountability.

Jay Schweikert, a policy analyst with the Cato Institute's Project on Criminal Justice, advocates a direct, practical approach for



restoring police accountability: End what is known as “qualified immunity.”

That's where police and other public officials are held to a lesser legal standard when it comes to court cases charging them with violating our rights. This is the reason, argues Schweikert, that “members of law enforcement routinely get away with horrific misconduct.”

There are several petitions currently pending before the U.S. Supreme Court that could lead to a legal reconsideration of the idea.* But without regard to any legal judgement, lawmakers in legislatures and citizens by petition can expressly repeal qualified immunity.

And should.

Without police accountability, what freedom is there?

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

* “[Q]ualified immunity is a legal doctrine that was invented from whole cloth by the Supreme Court,” Schweikert explains, “in open defiance of Congress’s decision to provide people with a federal remedy for the ‘deprivation of any right[]’ at the hands of a state actor.”