

Dear Connecticut Legislators,

My name is Abigail Ulman and I live in Fairfield. I am a graduate of Fairfield Public Schools and Six to Six Magnet School and I am writing to express my **support** for LCO #3471 “An Act Concerning Police Accountability.” This bill is a start to addressing white supremacy in the state and redirecting funding to community organizations advocating for housing, food, health, environmental, and education justice in marginalized CT communities. However, there are many more improvements that can be made. Specifically, I am writing ask that the following amendments be made to further strengthen this bill:

- Granting power that allows municipalities to establish Civilian Review Boards with Subpoena powers. As written, the bill currently says CRB's 'may' have subpoena power, not 'must'. That language is key.
- Outlawing police searches without probable cause, even if the person consents to the search
- Outlawing police officers from asking for any documents, such as green cards and other immigration documents, other than a driver's license during traffic stops. As written, the bill currently states police officers can ask for other forms of ID if someone does not provide a license. This is an unsafe measure for the undocumented community.
- Mandating a duty to intervene if a police officer witnesses another officer using excessive or illegal use-of-force.
- Ending qualified immunity for officers who violate citizens' civil rights.
- Banning stop-and-frisk in Connecticut.
- Demilitarizing Connecticut police departments, including the disposal of all military equipment currently held by police departments.
- Requiring that police officers prominently display their badge.
- Stronger Use of Force Standard. The bill should require that any use of deadly force is ‘necessary’ rather than the current standard of ‘objectively reasonable.’ This standard should also include an officers’ entire engagement with a person(s) rather than just the moment when severe or deadly force was used. The idea that police use force to make themselves more safe is not true. We have seen police use life-preserving skills when responding to white male mass shooters like Dylann Roof. In that case, police never found it “necessary” to “use force,” even though Dylann Roof had murdered nine Black worshippers within a church. Police protected him without conditions. But when police interact with people of color, particularly Black and Brown youth like Jayson Negron, Mubarak Soulemane, Zoe Dowell, Corbin Cooper, Jarelle Gibbs, Vincent Folkwes (Kuda), Malik Jones, Anthony Vega (Chulo), and so many others in this state who have been murdered at the hands of police, the “use of force” becomes “necessary.” Police in this state do not prioritize preventing harm when they come into contact with people of color. We know this because we have seen police escalate violence and cause harm over and over again: in over 30 police killings within the last three years, in their interactions with protestors, and in everyday abuses against people of color. The conditions that determine when police will “use force” and when police practice “de-escalation” tactics are directly connected to a person’s race, gender, housing status, mental health, and disability status. Legislators such as yourselves must define words like 'necessary force' and 'de-escalation' to clarify standards for police officers and protect all people in this state.

I also want to highlight the components of the bill I disagree with, which include:

- Increasing funding for police departments, whether municipal or state. We support the immediate defunding and divestment from police departments and reallocation of these resources into social services such as affordable housing, healthcare (especially during this current pandemic), and job

training and creation for residents.

- Adding social workers to police departments. The current bill calls for a study be conducted by departments on this matter. Social workers should be used for certain emergency/mental health calls but they should not work under police departments. Instead, CT would do well to follow the lead of cities like Albuquerque, NM, San Francisco, CA, and Eugene, OR ([https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/g5pyp9/these-cities-are-stopping-police-from-responding-to-homelessness-drug-use-and-mental-health-issues](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/g5pyp9/these-cities-are-stopping-police-from-responding-to-homelessness-drug-use-and-mental-health-issues)).
- The overrepresentation of police officers and politicians on the Police Officer Standards and Training Council. They make up 12/20 of the Council's membership. This council should be dominated by civilians, who experience the effects of police officers in their streets, not politicians or police officers.

Thank you for your time. I hope to witness your vote for this bill that will stand up for Black and Brown lives and make CT a better state.

Best,  
Abigail

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