



Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association
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July 17, 2020

Senator Gary Winfield, Co-Chair Judiciary Committee
Representative Steven Stafstrom, Co-Chair Judiciary Committee

**RE: TESTIMONY OF FRANK J. RICCIO II, PRESIDENT-ELECT, CCDLA
AN ACT CONCERNING POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY (Draft LCO 3471)
Committee on the Judiciary – Listening Session – July 17, 2020**

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Connecticut Criminal Defense Lawyers Association ("CCDLA") is a statewide organization of approximately 350 attorneys, both private and public, who are dedicated to defending people accused of criminal offenses. Founded in 1988, CCDLA works to improve the criminal justice system by ensuring that the individual rights guaranteed by the Connecticut and United States Constitutions are applied fairly and equally, and that those rights are not diminished.

The CCDLA joins the position taken by the Office of Chief Public Defender regarding "An Act Concerning Police Accountability". As President-Elect, I speak in support of greater accountability and fairness in the criminal legal system. This is an opportunity that hopefully will result in changes to policy and practice that will keep all communities safer, including by reducing unnecessary system involvement. Progress on police accountability will not be meaningful unless it is inclusive – unless it translates into every Connecticut resident being better protected and served. We thank you for considering our input as you craft meaningful progress. CCDLA also supports those reforms that the Office of the Chief Public Defender sent to you in early July.

My reading of the working draft of LCO 3471 is that the provisions would move policy and practice in the right direction, and we are pleased to support it. We also look forward to submitting proposals for the 2021 legislative session to further improve fairness and racial justice.

Insofar as sections 17 and 33 address subpoena powers, we ask that the Committee add protections to ensure that people who are summoned may provide truthful testimony in such contexts without risking exposure to prosecution. Absent such protections, the provisions would undermine the investigative purpose. It is extremely critical that clients and their families be able to bring forward issues of abuse and brutality without fear that it will impact their defense.

We realize that changing laws may not change hearts. But it can save lives. It can equip those who would do right with the tools they need. It can promote accountability and transparency. And it must help our state overcome a past rooted in injustice and move toward a future long, long overdue. Thank you.