



July 16, 2020

Testimony from Chazlyn Johnson, Connecticut field director/organizer of the Working Families Organization.

In support of:

- LCO (draft): 3471 An Act Concerning Police Accountability

Good morning, Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas and members of the Judiciary Committee.

Hi my name is Chazlyn Johnson I am the field director/organizer with Connecticut's Working Families Organization. I'm giving this testimony in support of LCO 3471 AAC Police Accountability. I strongly support legislation to hold police accountable for many reasons.

Let's talk about former Hartford officer Barone. He was involved in an incident that resulted in a man being kicked in the head while detained. Officer Barone was not the officer directly involved but he was there and was suspended for 10 days and then he was promoted. A couple months after this incident he was directly involved in the threatening incident of Black and Hispanic teenage boys.

I feel deeply that if former officer Barone would have been properly held accountable for just standing around and not stepping in when his co-worker kicked a civilian that was already detained, maybe just maybe he wouldn't have had a chance to threaten teenage boys. I too have a teenage son who I showed that video of Barone threatening those teenage boys. My son was shocked and scared because he felt like my teachings and talking about how to behave when confronted by police are or was overreacting and or exaggerating. He was scared because now he sees firsthand that I am not overreacting or exaggerating when teaching him how to behave around the police! He sees now this is really what is happening and right in our own community and it could very well happen to him. That situation made him feel nervous, uncomfortable and scared to know that he could be stopped by the police and threatened to be killed or shot just because an officer assumes he's doing something illegal.

For me to know that this officer who put fear into my son without even meeting him was still compensated after being fired angers me. A 10 day suspension with promotion is not exactly holding him accountable; firing him and still compensating him is really not holding him accountable for his actions.

I have been pulled over about 10 times in the last 7 years. I was given a ticket only once. My first time ever being pulled over, cops had their guns drawn on me just to see who was driving my car in my own neighborhood - right up the street from my mother's house. All I could think about is what if I was right in front of the house and my mom was to witness what was going on. I was afraid my mother might have made it worse. The other 9 times I was pulled over I was given the same reason "wanted to know who was driving my car, because they keep seeing it in the neighborhood"! The same neighborhood I grew up in the same neighborhood I live in. If I can't drive in my own neighborhood definitely makes me not want to leave my neighborhood. I was not aware that what I was doing was illegal. It's safe to assume it isn't against the law hence i never received a ticket. If i'm not mistaken that's considered harassment and intimidation. Anyone else could be jailed for harassment and intimidation, for some odd reasons cops aren't held to the same standards. If I were a person that wanted to harm and or bully men, women, and children and get away with it I would join the police force.

Again I am strongly in favor of holding police accountable, and support all legislation to do so. I strongly encourage my elected officials to do so as well.