

Dear Judiciary Committee Members,

I am going to try and make this short and to the point. I understand that you have listened to hours of testimony and have many letters to sort through. Although I see multiple things that need to be changed in the bill I want to reflect on what I feel is most important and another issue that I did not see really discussed.

As a detective in the Town of Redding and lifelong resident of Connecticut, I would like to express my concerns with LCO #3474- An Act Concerning Police Accountability. I am submitting this letter to express my opposition and concern to this bill. I whole heartily believe that passing this bill as is will put officers and citizens in danger and will be counter productive to the mission of this committee's agenda. I do believe that all members of this committee are truly trying to improve relations between police officers and citizens however I think aspects of this bill, including but not limited to the elimination of the "objectively reasonable" standard regarding the use of force and the elimination of Governmental and Qualified Immunity would be counterproductive. In watching some of the citizens responses today and responses from the committee it appears some members of the committee are stating the language changes are minimal. However, most law enforcement officers do not see this change as minimal. If the changes are truly minimal then why are the changes being implemented? I firmly believe these changes will cause officers to hesitate when performing their lawful job functions. With the changes to qualified immunity officers are likely to be less proactive in their policing. Although this may be the intention of some committee members I urge you to truly consider the consequences of the result of this removal, including the reduction in proactive policing and moving towards a reactive approach toward crime. I am not sure if that is the type of approach we as Connecticut residents want. As a resident and police officer I would like to see the prevention of crime through proactive policing so we have less victims of crimes and less situations where officers and residents are put in danger. In addition, I am certain many good officers will resign. We already ask our officers to put themselves in harms way to protect and serve but now we are further adding the possibility of these officers being sued and potentially putting their families livelihood in danger. As you have already heard from numerous police officers, departments, and unions, this will directly impact police retention and recruitment of good qualified officers that we want to make up our police force. In addition, I believe these changes would cause an uptick in frivolous lawsuits and would cause a financial burden not only to the police officers but also the towns and cities.

I urge all members of the committee to do ride alongs with local police departments to help them make decisions and determinations prior to implementing changes so that you can see the actual calls and officers responses to those calls and residents in their communities. I think this will also allow you to get prospective on the changes you are making and how it will effect the officers and residents.

I am also not really aware why the bill mentions the removal of officers from construction jobs. I urge you to research how this will directly impact revenue to the town and cities, as I know that the Town of Redding utilizes funds from officers working construction jobs for many things including but not limited to the purchase of police vehicles, which are then often repurposed to town vehicles. Without this revenue these vehicles would need to be purchased from funds collected from the town and may increase taxes.

In my short eight year career as a police officer, there has been much change to the perception of police officers. Although the perception has changed a great deal, the fundamental job has changed very little. When I first started, a police officer was seen as a noble and honorable

profession, however now being a police officer causes individuals in our community to hate and despise us just based on the profession alone without knowing us for who we are. To reiterate what some have said already, no one hates bad police officers more than good police officers because they tarnish our profession and make our jobs much more difficult. I hope that you as a committee can see that not all police officers are bad actors and that some of the changes to this bill would punishing everyone for the actions of few. As a police officer we are called to a large variety of calls for people in need of assistance. I hope we can all work together to create and better environment for all Connecticut residents including our police officers.

I thank you for taking the time to read and listen to the testimonies provided. I hope they provided you insight and that they will be taken into consideration. I really hope that you take into consideration not only my letter but the other letters from other professionals in the field that you are attempting to make changes to. As I do not know much about each of your professions I would hope that if changes were to be made to your specific profession that consideration from individuals within that profession would be considered as those individuals know more about the day to day then I would.

The last thing I would like to add is in listening to some testimony today I was disheartened to see some of the comments made by citizens and members of the committee in regards to their general opinions of police officers and law enforcement. I am saddened to hear these remarks as I and many others work hard to try and protect all citizens and put our lives on the line to protect each and everyone of you each and everyday. Regardless of some of your comments and some of the comments of other citizens, I want you to know that I and many others will continue to serve you and the residents of Connecticut and would lay our lives down to continue to protect you. With that being said however I cannot promise that I or many others will continue our careers in law enforcement should these changes be made. At some point our families need to come first and we need to do what is best for them.

Respectfully,

Detective Dias

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