

Judiciary Committee,

I am a resident of East Hartford. I am a Detective with the Hartford Police Department and have worked for HPD for 15 years. In my time there I have seen and responded to a litany of calls for service; domestics, assaults, stabbings,, shootings, rapes, robberies, homicides, and so on. I've had to fight for my life. Ive had to make the choice to shoot and possibly take one. I've always done my best to be fair, impartial, and remember thay the people I serve are exactly that. People. Human beings that are imperfect, that make mistakes, and sometimes need help. I've had the opportunity to build relationships with community members, have a positive impact on those that I encounter, and meet truly incredible people regardless of their position in life.

But no light can shine without casting a shadow. I've seen people do terrible things. I've seen gut-wrenching acts brutality forced on people's families and neighbors. I and my colleagues have been expected to stand for those who can't stand for themselves and be there to call for justice for those victims. I can't lie, sometimes doing just that can be rough. It's dangerous. It leaves scars. It doesn't always look good on camera, and a part of this job never will.

I've read through the police accountability bill. I cannot fathom how I or my coworkers will be able to do our jobs if it passes as it is written. How will I be able to enforce the law or confront those who break it if we are stripped of the protections we are given through qualified immunity? Not blanket or total immunity, qualified immunity. As a husband and father how can I risk my livelihood and my families security if I am vulnerable for the litigation and judgment of a civil suit from anyone who feels they have been wronged? How would teachers educate if they could be sued and fired for teaching something a parent doesn't agree with? How could a judge make decisions if the very people they were sentencing could sue them How? How could you do your job if you could be sued because a constituent didn't agree with the way you voted?

They can't. You can't. I can't.

I respect the need for reform. There are always places we can improve. Policing must evolve the way society evolves. What happened in Minneapolis was wrong. It was just plain wrong. I haven't seen or heard a single Police Officer defend the action. Not one. There's no way that the former officer would have been provided qualified immunity from damages under those circumstances. His actions were willful, wanton, and malicious. But that shouldn't mean we punish and expose every other police officer in the county or in the State of Connecticut.

Are there bad cops? Yes. The same as every profession. But the overwhelming majority of us do our jobs to the best of our ability and we do it with pride.

This bill will drastically reduce our ability to combat and investigate crime. It will bring proactively to zero. We will embolden and empower criminals and we will have little to no recourse to address it. We will not be safer. My family will not be safer. Your family will not be safer. The families that rely on BOTH of us will not be safer.

I am available to speak if you feel the need. You represent my family, my friends, and my neighbors. I implore you to use caution when considering this bill and do not hastily rush to appease those who truly have no idea what the realistic impact of this bill is.

I eagerly await your response to this legislation and thoughts of how this bill will affect all of us.

Steven Citta  
East Hartford