

## Testimony on Draft LCO #3471

Dear Legislative and Judiciary Committees:

I wish to address the proposed Legislative Draft (LCO #3471) as it pertains to law enforcement in Connecticut. I am a resident of Woodbury Connecticut and a retired State Trooper who served with distinction and honor prior to retiring after 30 years of service; 20 of those years as a Sergeant/Front Line Supervisor. I served a good number of those years in investigative units such as the Western District Major Crime Squad; Selected for a Commissioner's Special Assignment working in conjunction with the Chief State's Attorney's Office to conduct criminal/internal investigations of troopers and police officers in 2006-2007; and served nine years assigned to the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force.

I'm writing in opposition to the aforementioned bill if voted on in its entirety. I generally agree with the points brought forth by Connecticut State Police Union President Andrew Matthews Esq, Attorney Elliot Spector, and Vice President of the Connecticut Fraternal Order of Police, Sgt John Krupinski in opposition to this bill. While I agree with portions of this bill there are other aspects of this bill which I strongly do not support. It has been my experience that Connecticut Policing in whole has been innovative and at the forefront of developing policing policies and procedures and is looked upon nationally as a leader in that respect. Many of the items I see in this bill seem to be a knee jerk reaction to events which have not occurred in our State and are detrimental to policing and public safety.

Connecticut Police are trained in de-escalation tactics. Police Officers are trained to follow a Use of Force Continuum. This continuum teaches officers to react with the appropriate force based on the behavior of the individual. Officers are taught to evaluate and re-evaluate their use of force continuously throughout a confrontation in order to utilize the minimum amount of force necessary to bring an individual under control. Reducing force options may lead to an officer having to jump to a higher level of force. Officers who violate the policy are subjected to disciplinary action and potential criminal charges that already exist within our statutes (strangulation, assault, reckless endangerment). I didn't see anything in this bill that addresses hands on tactics training or restraint training for police.

I strongly disagree with regards to the "demilitarization theme" of police that seems to be addressed in this bill. One only need to look at a couple of recent examples such as the Boston Marathon terrorism attack conducted by the Tsarnaev brothers which occurred in our neighboring state of Massachusetts. Need I remind everyone that after the bombing the Tsarnaev brothers engaged police in gunfire and throwing homemade explosive devices at police officers and their vulnerable (not bomb or bulletproof) vehicles as they were pursued through neighborhoods. "Military type weapons and vehicles" utilized by police were necessary to neutralize the threat. Need I remind everyone that the individual who attempted to blow up Time Square with a car bomb in 2010, Faisal Shahzad, was a resident of Shelton and Bridgeport Connecticut? He had plans to kill police officers as well as citizens. If his plan to take on police were successful, the "military type equipment" would have been a welcome necessity to neutralize this threat to protect both citizens and police. Lastly, I along with dozens and dozens of other Troopers and Police Officers responded to Sandy Hook. I want you to imagine you are a police officer responding to an active shooting scene or active terrorism event. You hear terrifying radio transmissions as you are in route and arriving on scene. You know based on radio transmissions that the active shooter posses a superior firearm and you are outgunned with only your service pistol even before you get there. You also know that the active shooter's firearm will penetrate your non bulletproof vehicle. A

secondary shooter hasn't been ruled out. You know there are injured and dead adults and children within the building and people need to be evacuated as soon as possible. Ask yourself this, wouldn't it be nice to have a bullet proof vehicle to approach the building to help neutralize the threat and to evacuate the injured? Wouldn't it be nice to at least have a comparable firearm to match you adversary and know you at least stand a fighting chance and hopefully can bring the violent act to an end before anyone else is killed or injured? Now imagine if this incident was occurring at night. Wouldn't it be nice to have night vision goggles to help you spot injured victims in the dark halls or to see the shooter? Now I can tell you I know some Trooper's and Police Officers who were thinking those exact thoughts under similar circumstances. Taking away the equipment as described in this bill is irresponsible and an absolute threat to police and public safety. The armored vehicles described can be utilized to insert police into active violent scenes as well as to evacuate injured citizens. They can be used as a approach vehicle in suspected bomb cases. The firearms (patrol rifles) give the police a fighting chance in situations in similar situations described. Night vision goggles are useful when attempting to locate lost, injured hikers, victims or prowlers laying in wait for victims.

I support the reporting requirements and tracking use of force incidents addressed in this bill. I support those reports receiving judicial review. I stand by the bias training and affirmative action motions addressed in this bill. I stand by the dash camera and body camera requirements as outlined in this bill. I believe our police need to be as transparent as possible in order to gain the trust of the people we serve. As I have stated I support certain portions put forth in this bill.

I would also support bills that remove police from handling calls for individuals suffering from mental health issues from start to finish. I would support a bill that would actually require a physical response from a crisis intervention team rather than a a phone call. Police have increasingly dealt with mental heath issues since many mental health institutions and programs were defunded in the 1980's and those duties thrust upon police when individuals were placed back in communities with weak checks and balances.

I'm also writing today with the hope that you will review a legislative change I'm proposing pertaining to policing. The change would allow for troopers and police officers who have retired in good standing be allowed to work as part-time police officers in towns where they do not perform security work. (Having police powers in a town where security work is performed could cause a potential conflict of interest) Please see a brief summary of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS) below and my explanation.

CGS Sec. 29-262j. "Persons vested with police powers ineligible for licensure (security guard license)". Currently, Connecticut General Statutes {CGS) do not allow for any individual with "police powers" to be eligible for security guard licensure under the provisions of 29-161g to 29-161x. **PROPOSED CHANGE: Exempting RETIRED POLICE OFFICERS/TROOPERS IN GOOD STANDING** from this requirement as long as the individual **DOES NOT PERFORM SECURITY DUTIES IN THE SAME JURISDICTION AS WHERE HE/SHE HAS PART-TIME LAW ENFORCEMENT POWERS**. This exemption would only allow police officers/troopers who have retired in good standing to hold a security guard license for employment and be eligible for part-time police employment (excludes full-time police employment).

Currently, CGS 10-244a "Employment of persons to provide security services in public school while in possession of a firearm" states: (subsection-b) A municipality or local regional board of education may employ or enter into an agreement with a retired police officer to provide security services in a public school if such retired police officer is a qualified retired enforcement officer, as defined in 18 USC-

926C, as amended from time to time...

I retired with 30 years of service and an impeccable record from the Connecticut State Police in 2016. I subsequently took a job as a part-time police officer in the town of Woodbury. I served as the School Resource Officer and I augmented patrol when other officers took vacation time, sick time or as the town requested my services. Part-time police officers serve a vital role in small towns by augmenting manpower requests and keeping police budgets down. In December 2017, I took a full-time job as a security supervisor at a private school in New Haven which required me to obtain a State of Connecticut security guard card license. During the process I was informed that Connecticut law forbade me from retaining my part-time position as a police officer. I was forced to surrender my police powers and resign as a part-time police officer; thus terminating my services with the Town of Woodbury. This current law makes no sense to me because my full-time security position is located in New Haven and my part-time police officer job was located in Woodbury. I see no justification or conflict which should preclude a "retired police officer in good standing" from being able to perform both jobs so long as the security job is not located in the same jurisdiction where one holds "police powers". The Woodbury First Selectman supported this position prior to his untimely passing. I'm aware this current law has effected several other retired law enforcement officers who are employed as School Security Officers and campus security at colleges and universities. I believe the current law impedes small towns from hiring and retaining part-time officers, thereby increasing police budgets. The current laws deprive myself, and others, from a secondary income and from performing a service to which we take pride in. I hope to gain your support in sponsoring a change to this law.

I would be happy to discuss my position and or suggestions pertaining to the purposed bill or my suggestive change in allowing retired police officers in good standing hold a security license and be employed as part-time police officers under the aforementioned conditions.

Respectfully Submitted,  
David Wagner  
Woodbury, CT