

# Department of Police Services

Town of Southington, Connecticut

**Deputy Chief William Palmieri**

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**Chief of Police**

John F. Daly

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Judiciary Committee  
State of Connecticut

Re: An Act Concerning Police Accountability

Dear Chairman and Ranking Members:

My name is William Palmieri and I am the Deputy Police Chief with the Southington Police Department. I also reside in the community which I have served as a Law Enforcement Professional for the past 35 years.

I would like to provide the committee with my feedback on the Act Concerning Police Accountability that is currently being discussed.

I believe Law Enforcement officers across our state support changes to our laws that will make the community safer for everyone. I also believe for any Police Department to be successful they must be accepted by the community and be a strong stakeholder within the community they serve. The need to have a strong relationship, built on trust, accountability and transparency with both the community and its members are the most important building blocks for any Police Department. Connecticut Police Officers support the need to have all of these building blocks in place within the community they serve.

The need to have uniform standards for all police departments, as well as uniform training standards for all police officers, are both critical and would allow officers increased knowledge and tools when serving their communities. The expanded use of video devices would also increase the ability to document police interaction and promote transparency within the community.

The Connecticut Police Officer Standard and Training Council (POST) continues to do an excellent job in working with the State Government and Connecticut residents in the areas of policy change, training program adjustments and Model Policy development. POST has also created an Accreditation Program for Police Departments, which is the foundation to standardize uniform police practices. The mission of Accreditation is listed below:

*Enhance the professionalism of the Connecticut Law Enforcement agencies through voluntary compliance with contemporary, internationally recognized standards of excellence.*

Connecticut POST also requires rigorous standards for hiring Police Officers that includes a written test, oral panel interview, a polygraph interview, psychological examination, and a

thorough employment background investigation.

The proposed changes to the legal standard for justified Use of Deadly Force (section 29) and the Qualified Immunity (section 41) do not require changes. They do not protect an officer who clearly abuses their power or violates a person's civil rights.

The proposed changes to the Use of Deadly Force and the Qualified Immunity listed above are just a couple of examples. There are other changes being proposed that I feel need further discussion and/or review. This would allow for a clear understanding of what is currently in place as a standard police practice, and hopefully address concerns or perception on a given subject or section.

Being involved in Connecticut Policing for the past 35 years I believe Connecticut is way ahead of the curve when looking at how other states operate from an employment, training, policy and procedure perspective. I also believe a Connecticut Police Officer understands the need to be involved in their community, while being transparent and holding themselves accountable for their actions.

In February of 2018 an independent report was published that studied the Training Curriculum and Education of Police Officers in the State of Connecticut. The Public Safety & Security Committee of the State of Connecticut oversaw the review. The Co-Chairmen were Representative Verrengia and Eric Coleman. The report identified POST as being one of 48 out of 850 Police Academies that are CALEA accredited in the United States.

I believe we can all agree that no one is perfect and that belief should apply to the Law Enforcement Profession. I also believe the vast majority if not all Police Officers do not want to work with a Police Officer that abuses his power or dishonors the badge they wear.

Police Accountability is one of the most important parts of the Law Enforcement Profession, and equally important is the relationships and trust between a Police Department and the community they serve. Now more than ever we need to have those difficult conversations with all of the stakeholders present. The only way to increase accountability, transparency and trust is through conversation and discussion which will translate into consensus on policy or operational adjustments.

The Connecticut Police Officer Standard and Training Council has shown time and time again their ability to listen, review and make adjustments to Connecticut Police Operating Standards. I believe POST is up to the task of assisting in the review.

I would respectfully request consideration to either form a committee or use an existing committee to have a further conversation about this draft bill and allow for all stakeholders to provide information and feedback.

Respectfully;



William Palmieri  
Deputy Police Chief