

Dear members of the Judiciary committee:

I understand that your committee is accepting testimony regarding the Police Accountability Act. I live and vote in West Hartford and my name is Edna Levy. I am a teacher of middle and high school grades, and I am writing to support the bill (LCO #3471) with amendments.

Thank you all for the work you do to keep our state safe for all its residents. This bill is a vital step as we continuously aim towards "a more Perfect Union" as a country, and as a state.

Important parts of the bill, that must go even further:

Section 7- Implicit Bias training

- Strengthening implicit bias training for state and municipal law enforcement is critical
- We must add anti-racism training, and support all this training with rigorous research

Section 17- Civilian Review Board

- municipalities must have strong civilian review boards. I marched with Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance to push the Hartford Mayor and Police Chief to support such oversight, and I feel strongly that this is an essential part of police reform. The board MUST have subpoena power and full investigative powers.
- the bill must insist that each municipality have such a board (it is not enough to merely allow such boards to exist -- the most problematic communities may never follow through!)
- similarly, we need an office of Inspector General.

Section 30- Officers' Duty to Intervene to Stop Use of Excessive Force

- It is vital that oddivers be mandated to intervene when they see excessive force, and that they be protected from retaliation.

Section 40- Prohibition of Police Using Military Equipment

We must get rid of the military equipment that CT police departments currently own, and stop accepting such equipment in the future. Police should serve and protect -- not go to war against our citizens.

Section 41- Civil cause of action against certain police officers

- I am deeply shocked and outraged that officers who violate civil rights are protected from consequences by qualified immunity. Just as we hold nurses and doctors accountable for mistakes or intentional wrongdoing, we MUST hold officers and corrections officers accountable. We must end qualified immunity for police officers who violate civil rights and perpetrate violence against civilians.

I am a teacher and feel very strongly that we must rethink the role of police in the schools. In particular, this bill should remove School Resource Officers (SROs) from schools. We MUST to interrupt the very real school to prison pipeline (which disproportionately affects Black and Brown young people.) Children and teens can only learn if they are safe and feel safe; their schools must be places where each and every student is listened to and supported -- not treated as a criminal.

Please add a provision to remove SROs from schools.

This bill is an opportunity to pass strong legislation that will make Connecticut safer for all people living in Connecticut, especially our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) residents. Please amend and pass LCO 3471 An Act Concerning Police Accountability.

Many thanks,

Edna Levy

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