

My name is Frederick Dirga and I am a Sergeant with the Middletown Police Department. I am writing this email over concerns I have with the police reform bill that has been presented by the judiciary committee. Although the title of this bill would seemingly be something that would benefit society, I believe the proposals within would be counterproductive to public safety, and act punitively towards police officers.

The following issues would be extremely detrimental to public safety.

1. Taking away or modifying qualified immunity is extremely dangerous. This will have a major negative impact on police proactivity and enforcement action decisions. This is an established practice that has been litigated for years. It was created as a protection for officers so they cannot be held liable for their good faith actions where the law is clearly not established. This also exposes municipalities to greater liability.
2. Citizen complaint review boards with subpoena power would have a similar effect in in an officers decision making and activity. It is easy for anyone who does not do the job of a police officer to second-guess a split second decision. A civilian rarely understands the decisions that police officers make, as they are not informed about their training. When faced with uneducated and emotion based scrutiny, officers will shy away from taking enforcement action and err on the side of their own self preservation.
3. Being able to FOIA police officers records will also lead to inactivity in police officers and an influx of undue litigation. Any citizen can make a false allegation any time with no fear of any penalty for doing so.
4. The outlawing of consent searches granted by citizens is ludicrous. How is the legislature going to outlaw an individual from giving consent to search?
5. Removing police officers from construction sites is extremely dangerous. This speaks for itself in the sense that there is no other reason for an officer to be there other than to prevent injury, property damage, or death. An officers mere presence provides a deterrent against motorists committing traffic offenses. This certainly provides safety for the workers and motorists alike. The utilization of flagman with no ability to take enforcement action does not provide any deterrent.
6. I would hope that you would understand the need for military design equipment. Without such equipment murders, like the Sandy Hook School massacre, would occur with greater frequency and with greater loss of life.

These are only but a few of the glaring issues within this bill. Many of the parts of this bill that are being proposed are in direct contradiction of clearly established case law; many of which have been vetted and debated all the way up to the US Supreme Court.

I believe this bill has arisen from a misguided narrative created by a small, but extremely vocal segment of society. I would hope that you would personally take great interest in this bill and actively oppose it with great vigor.

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