

To Whom This May Concern,

My name is Gabriella Lieberman, and I am a resident of Stamford, CT. As a white person, I have been privileged to have never experienced the brunt of racial discrimination. However, as someone who strives to be anti-racist, I have taken it upon myself to educate myself on the systemic racism that is inherent in current police practices. I have done so by listening to people of color's experiences, reading their stories, and remembering their names.

It is with these experiences in mind that I write to you to testify on behalf of Connecticut's Police Accountability Bill.

It is time that Connecticut forgoes questionable police practices and adopts policies that will benefit the community at-large. It is time that Connecticut ensures proper accountability for those in a position to abuse the immense power and authority granted to them. It is time that Connecticut guarantees that officers are mentally fit and can handle a basic training in implicit bias, crowd control, and cultural competency. It is time that Connecticut limits the flow of military-grade equipment to local police forces who would do better with mental health professionals on hand. It is time that Connecticut steps up.

I appreciate the CT House Judiciary Committee's willingness to hold this session and I would like to offer a piece of advice to the members today – there is a distinction between "hearing" and "listening." Hearing is "the faculty to perceive sounds" while listening is to "give ones attention to a sound" and "to take notice of and act on what someone says." I implore the members of the CT House Judiciary Committee to embody today's "listening session" and be mentally present during each testimony. It is not enough to be physically present – listen to your constituents who you have a responsibility to represent.

Sincerely,

Gabriella Lieberman
City of Stamford