

To whom it may concern--

My name is Hayley Kolding. I grew up in Canton, currently live in West Hartford, and have worked as a high school teacher in Hartford.

After reading the draft of the bill on police accountability, I would like to urge even stricter regulations against the use of deadly force and chokeholds.

We must remember that "to use deadly force" means "to kill" or "to execute." In a state that abolished the death penalty in 2012, we still provide numerous legal opportunities for police officers to kill--and not even to execute people who have been convicted of a heinous crime after a full trial, nor to kill as the sole way of defending one's own life, but to kill a suspect who has not been tried and convicted simply to prevent that suspect's escape from arrest or custody.

No matter what crime a suspect is accused of committing, that suspect cannot be sentenced to death by a police officer whose job is merely to arrest the suspect and/or interrupt the crime as it occurs. If the suspect escapes because the officer did not use deadly force, so be it--the suspect will be found again and the arrest will proceed. An arrest cannot be a sentence in and of itself.

The ONLY exception is if deadly force is truly the only method left for preventing the suspect from causing grave and irreparable harm to victims or officers in the moment.

You as well as I would like this bill to be effective in preserving the dignity of human life, defending citizen's right to a fair trial, and holding police accountable to the values of safety they purport to uphold. Therefore, the bill must not allow deadly force in any situation where it is not strictly necessary for saving a victim or officer's life or for stopping an ongoing heinous and violent crime (ex: life-threatening assault, rape).

I strongly support the bill's establishment of factors to consider when evaluating whether a law enforcement officer's use of deadly physical force was objectively reasonable, specifically factors 2 ("the officer engaged in reasonable de-escalation measures before using deadly physical force") and 3 ("any of the officer's conduct led to an increased risk of the situation that led up to the use of such force").

Moreover, it is my hope that CT will continue to move in the direction of reducing police presence and budgets as much as possible, creating jobs instead for social workers and other unarmed, specially trained officers to restore peace and safety in communities without representing the potential for deadly force.

As a white woman, I am asserting that I would feel safer in a Connecticut with significantly fewer police officers and with more robust resources for healing communities from the ground up.

Both for the dignity and safety of our Black and Brown community members and for the overall well-being of everyone in CT, I urge our legislators to do everything in their power to hold police officers accountable.

Thank you.

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