

Name: Jaelen King
Town: New Haven

Greetings,

My name is Jaelen King, and I am a rising junior at Yale University. I am writing to you in regards to LCO #3471: An Act Concerning Police Accountability (AACPA). I stand in full support with Black and Brown community members in their demands for amendments to this bill.

More specifically, I support the following:

- Allowing Towns/Cities to Form Civilian Review Boards w/Subpoena Power
- Outlawing Police Searches without Probable Cause, Even w/Consent
- Outlawing Police Officers from Asking for any Documents (Green Card/Immigration Docs) other than Driver's License at Traffic Stops
- Mandating Duty to Intervene if Officer Witnesses Excessive Force
- Ending Qualified Immunity for Officers who Violate Civil Rights
- Banning Stops and Frisk
- Demilitarizing CT Police Depts, Including Disposal of Existing Equipment
- Requiring Officers to Display their Badge

I disagree with the following:

- Increasing Funding for Municipal/State PDs
- Adding Social Workers to PDs. Social Workers Should NOT Work Under Police Departments
- Police and Politicians Make up 12/20 Members of Police Officer Standards and Training Council. This Council Should be Dominated by Civilians not Politicians/Police

I want to reemphasize the community's perspective. The police reform bill MUST include the following:

1. **Correctional Reform.** Provisions of the bill aimed at holding police accountable MUST extend to correctional officers. Just as policing disproportionately damages black and brown communities, prisons disproportionately lock up black and brown people. In Connecticut, 71% of the people in prison are Black and Brown. In Northern Correctional, the State's supermax facility, 82% of people are black and brown.
2. **Independent Oversight.** The bill's draft language calls for the creation of an Inspector General appointed by the Chief State's Attorney. First, this is not independent oversight as prosecutors work closely with police officers and cannot be considered reliably independent. Second, the Inspector General would not be charged with monitoring and investigating correctional staff performance and institutional policy. The bill's draft language only covers correctional oversight when investigating a death in the Department of Correction (D.O.C) custody, an absolute bare minimum that should not be considered substantive oversight. Notably, Connecticut is one of the only states that lacks external oversight of the D.O.C.
3. **A Shift in Funding from Corrections to Communities.** The bill's focus on demilitarization does not go far enough. The bill must explicitly shift funding from policing into communities of color. Likewise, the bill must include a shift in funding from militarizing and overpopulating the D.O.C. to investing in resources for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Now that the state has drastically reduced the prison population, it is time to have a serious conversation about when and how to begin closing costly prisons, starting with Northern Correctional, a facility recently cited by the United Nations for human rights violations due to the excessive use of solitary confinement.
4. **Banning routine practices that inflict long-term trauma.** The bills focus on banning practices that inflict wanton and unnecessary violence during police stops is well warranted. Banning these practices is long overdue, but tactics such as chokeholds must also be banned in the Department of Correction. Similarly, the bill should focus on banning solitary confinement, an ineffective practice often understood to be torture, which can inflict life long trauma. The bill must also ban the use of prone and in-cell restraints.
5. **Qualified Immunity.** The use of qualified immunity to shield police from civil action is an essential component of this legislation; the abolition of qualified immunity must be extended to correctional officers.

I am writing to you as a concerned student who has had the privilege of being able to work in close partnership with Black and Brown community members. Quite simply, reform is not enough. While this bill is a step in the right direction, it is by no means a finished product. Until

Black and Brown communities truly feel safe, the state will always have more work to do. I urge you to realize that the demands activists are calling for are not unreasonable. They make perfect, logical sense, and it would be a shame for you all to write them off as radical and impractical. We must change our thought process from considering that police officers are an essential part of public safety. The people that know what the community needs are the members who live in it and have to deal with the constant burdens of oppression every day. It is time you all as a committee start to listen to them.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Take the right first step in approving this bill with the proposed amendments. Then, keep taking the next right step.

With hope for a better tomorrow,

Jaelen King