

Hi,

My name is Jake Dittes and I live & vote in New Haven. I am writing to urge you to pass LCO #3471 An Act Concerning Police Accountability (AACPA) with amendments. This proposed bill includes important reforms. I ask that you include these measures to strengthen the bill further:

Stronger Use of Force Standard: The bill should require that any use of deadly force is “necessary,” rather than the current standard of “objectively reasonable.” The use of force standard should include an officer’s entire engagement with a person rather than just the moment when severe or deadly force was used. Did the officer attempt to de-escalate the situation? Did the officer use force proportional to the seriousness of the situation? What led to encounter initially, and was the use of force necessary at all?

Inspector General Hiring & Firing: The proposed bill includes the creation of an Inspector General to investigate incidents of police use of force, but leaves the hiring & firing of that position to the Chief State's Attorney at will; this is a conflict of interest. The Inspector General should be appointed by the Criminal Justice Commission directly.

Public Right to Record Police: Ban police officers from taking cell phones or other recording devices without a person's consent or warrant. Give civilians the right to sue police departments if they take or destroy these devices without cause, as is exemplified in Colorado Law.

Police Failure to Record: Even with police body & dash cameras adopted by police departments, too often use of force incidents do not get recorded. The bill should establish a rebuttable presumption that, if there is no police video recording of an incident, the officer is presumed to have used excessive force.

This is a moment in Connecticut’s history that we cannot let pass by. You have an opportunity to pass strong legislation that will make Connecticut safer for all of our residents, especially our residents of color.

Thank you for your service of our state,

Jake Dittes
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