

To whom this may concern,

I am a resident of New Haven and an organizer with the Connecticut Bail Fund. I want to speak on qualified immunity. Qualified immunity allows police to dictate what is true--so this means that what police say and believe is allowed to arbitrate justice, even when they are the ones being investigated.

Police always say they were acting in good faith, they always say they reasonably believed they had to do what they did. But as Representative Robin Porter said during the hearing today, the institution of police, the system of policing, is deeply racialized and always has been. In the eyes of police officers, it was objectively reasonable to punish and kill enslaved Black people who were seeking freedom from slavery—this was one of the primary origins of police in America. In 2018, the institution of police and the Waterbury state's attorney's office decided it was objectively reasonable for officer James Boulay to shoot and kill 15 year old Jayson Negron. A year later, the Fairfield state's attorney's office decided it was objectively reasonable for five officers to fire on three Black youth driving in a car who were defenseless and terrified, Noah Young, was only 18 at time, Caleb Tisdol was 15, like Jayson, he was hospitalized for four days. and Zoe Dowdell 20, was killed by police gunfire.

If we want police to be held accountable in this state, we cannot rest on laws and policies that make it so that police get to set, get to decide, what is fact and what is truth. If you look at really any case of police brutality that has been taken on and decided by the state, police always use objectivity to protect themselves and justify their violence, the state always takes their word to be the truth.

This is why Connecticut police can engage in all out warfare on Black and Brown communities with the protection of the law. I support this bill because it will eliminate qualified immunity. We need to take away police officers' ability to justify their violence on the basis of their own versions of objectivity that there is no check on. No profession should be allowed to dictate reality this way, especially not a profession that has the power to take human life and destroy our communities.

Jeannia Fu