

Good afternoon,

I'm writing about voting no to LCO 3471. I encourage you to think about Connecticut policing when considering this bill. Please don't paint all police with a broad brush, and please don't use what is happening in other parts of the country to change what doesn't need to be changed in our state. Police officers in Connecticut are already trained to use de-escalation tactics. They are also trained that deadly force is the last option when all other options have been exhausted. Unfortunately, sometimes these are split second decisions that have to be made to preserve innocent life and the life of the police officer, often have to make a split second decision when using force, especially deadly force. If an officer is expected to exhaust all necessary means or attempt to deescalate a situation prior to using making a use of force decision innocent people will be harmed or possibly killed. Keeping this in mind, the Supreme Court has already established a reasonableness standard from *Graham v. Connor*. This standard is applied by people who understand police training and tactics. Currently, thankfully, the reviews of those actions are done by qualified people who understand police training and tactics and use the "reasonableness standard" properly. There is no need to introduce another level of unqualified and untrained people into the reviews. Now add the thought in the back of the officer's mind that he or she could be sued personally for doing their job. Not for doing anything wrong, simply doing their job. Qualified immunity is there to protect officers, prosecutors, judges, and public officials (including law makers) who are doing the right thing, not to shield those who are doing the wrong thing. There is also a line in the proposed legislation about officers who "undermine the public confidence in law enforcement". First, this is such a broad statement, it is not clear how this would even be applied. Second, isn't that exactly what this bill does? A more effective approach from the body of law makers would be to say we support our law enforcement officers and we have been ahead of the curve since we enacted a Connecticut-specific Police Reform Act in 2015. I'm sure you have read the letter written by Elliot Spector regarding this bill. I've attached it to this email in case you haven't. It proves that, at least in Connecticut, this is not the time to further vilify the officers people rely on to help them and be their guardians. This is the perfect opportunity for the law makers of this state to use facts to say we support and stand with the men and women who are expected to enforce the laws that are passed.

Thank you for listening,  
Jeff Murphy  
Farmington resident