

I am employed as a first line supervisor in a suburban Hartford County agency. I am proud of my agency, our officers and my community and the professional services my department provides.

I have several concerns with this bill as it is proposed. I believe passing this legislation as it stands would do a great disservice to the citizens of Connecticut, our municipalities and our officers. Any real, honest conversation by experts would refute much of what the public has come to believe about policing in Connecticut. Our state has consistently been at the forefront of adapting to policing changes, adopting best standards and being responsive to our communities. We should not enact knee-jerk legislation that is anti-police and will have long lasting negative implications. I have picked several specific sections that cause me the greatest concern.

#### Qualified Immunity changes.

I am concerned that the public believes that qualified immunity means an officer or agency cannot be sued. It does not. It simply limits the lawsuits to violations that an officer should have known about. Repealing this protection will create an untenable situation where officers will be worried to act, it will make it hard to recruit and retain candidates, and it will cost our municipalities a tremendous amount of money. Officers must make split second decisions in times of high anxiety and danger. The Supreme Court has recognized that these decisions are second-guessed with the luxury of time and information. Making officers fearful of being sued will undoubtedly result in loss of life as well as a tremendous economic impact on the municipalities.

#### Consent Searches

The concept of consent searches is one of law enforcement's most valuable tools. Consent searches keep people safe. They cannot be coerced. They allow officers to de-escalate and determine the level of danger at an incident. Taking away consent searches will certainly result in a larger number of use of force incidents and arrests, or a lack of enforcement and contacts. It is simply too dangerous a job to take this tool away.

#### Non-Driver Identification

Similar to consent searches above, identifying people in vehicles is critically important for the safety of the public and officers. Not being able to determine whom you are dealing with as an officer will result in more injuries or a lack of enforcement and contacts. It is critical for the legislature to be mindful of the number of domestic-abusers, trafficking victims, felony-level arrests, and others that are identified and detained after traffic stops. Removing this practice from the police will quickly be known by the criminal element and used to their full advantage and will hinder the apprehension of wanted criminals and make our state much less safe.

#### Security Officer Employment

The provision regarding security officer employment for de-certified officers appears punitive. When the legislature is considering restorative justice and rights of felons, it appears purely punitive to deny a citizen a specific job category after they have been deemed unsuitable for another one.

In conclusion, I urge you to not rush to penalize the law enforcement community in Connecticut for the actions of officers in other states and jurisdictions. Our state is at the forefront of policing in America

and we are leaders in community policing. We are at a moment in history that has the attention of our entire country and world, and it should be utilized to effect meaningful change, but I do not believe it should be focused on policing here in our state. The media has demonized my chosen profession and has created an incredibly hostile environment where we are being judged by the actions of others with no connection whatsoever to our state.

We need to have honest and thoughtful conversations, not driven by media manipulation and statistics that are taken out of context or are deliberately misleading. As we look at other states and cities nationally and see the results of hurried reactions involving policing, I do not see improvements, I see growing crime, police officer dissatisfaction and communities losing control. Rushing to pass this legislation will have far-reaching and unintended consequences that will take many years to remedy and will result in a more dangerous state.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jeffrey Hodder.