

Testimony Regarding LCO No. 3471
An Act Concerning Police Accountability

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jenna and I am an organizer with March For Our Lives and high school senior from Suffield. I am testifying in **support** of LCO 3471, but today can't be the end of the road.

In the first 20 days of this year, 3 residents were killed by police. Peaceful protesters have been met with police wielding riot gear and pepper spray. We cannot deny that police violence and racism exist here or that either is a lost cause.

I support the reforms in this bill, like demilitarizing and eliminating consent searches, but they aren't enough. The Minneapolis Police Department values procedural justice, bias trainings, and the usage of body cameras, just as proposed in this bill, yet George Floyd was murdered. The officers who murdered Eric Garner ruled that the chokehold used on him was not a chokehold. We must focus on divestment rather than harm reduction, which would reallocate some funds to schools, healthcare, and food and housing security. Issues like drug use and homelessness should not be met with a police response, and we need to equip the services that can properly handle them.

Divesting these funds does not compromise public safety, as I don't think society right now can be defined as safe when Black people are kept in check through intimidation. Divesting is also not radical. The current idea of radical might be the future's vision of just, since the abolition of slavery and voting rights for women were once seen this way. In fact, the LA mayor moved to reallocate \$150 million from his city's nearly \$2 billion police budget. We can have the courage to follow suit.

I have learned the inextricable ties between police violence and the issues my generation mobilizes against, such as gun violence. Opponents of divestment weaponize trauma and speak out on behalf of survivors, such as citing the Sandy Hook and Parkland tragedies to justify leaving policing untouched. To me, this movement is more about the intersections of injustices, not citing mass shootings, which account for 1% of all gun deaths, to discourage support for these reforms. If the General Assembly wishes to end the terrorization of Black and Brown bodies, it must take further action in upcoming sessions.

I am used to legislators issuing thoughts and prayers in response to shootings, a cycle that continues with Black lives. These words are not often backed with action and intent. But last year, I witnessed 3 historic pieces of gun safety legislation pass. We can achieve justice, but it's a matter of when and how many lives it will take. I support this bill for its measures of accountability, but certain sections must be further built upon. I encourage the committee to recommend this bill with the ACLU of CT's proposed amendments and ask that the General Assembly passes it. Thank you.

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