

Dear Senators and Representatives,

I would first like to thank you for taking the time to review police accountability measures in our state. I'm a lifelong resident of the state and through the years I've been proud to call this state home. However, I think there is a lot of room for growth and areas that need improvement, one of which is police accountability. Over the past 7 years, there have been hundreds of stories about lives lost at the hands of the police, and it's taken a nationwide breakdown for our state to act. Wouldn't you love to be a leader in this area? Wouldn't you love to go home and say "We just reshaped the future of this country!"? Now is your chance. When Colorado first proposed marijuana legalization, other states laughed and scolded them. Now, it's a huge source of income for many states, and there have been only positive results. Imagine being that type of leader! The problem with most of the proposals in this bill is that they act as a Band-Aid to cover wounds that were already made. Going forward, we need to prevent the creation of new wounds. We need to be proactive when it comes to human lives.

Connecticut could be one of the most successful states in the country if we were able to truly act proactively instead of reactively. One of the best ways to do that is by decreasing crime rates in a preemptive manner. The police forces are employed to protect and serve our communities, and what better way to reach policing success than limit the amount of protection that needs to happen. If we redistribute our resources to prevent crime from the source, we could solve so many problems! Please consider using larger portions of the state budget to address homelessness, drug addiction, and other social issues with social reform, not violence and arrests. We need to help our fellow residents instead of putting them down. *Redistribute the Connecticut police budget.*

One of the best ways to do this is to demilitarize Connecticut communities. The Connecticut General Assembly should impose a ban on the use of military equipment and withdraw participation in police militarization programs. By accepting military equipment, you are only encouraging it's use. Similar to how a child will always doodle if you put a pen and paper in front of them, an officer is bound to use military grade equipment when it is provided, whether or not it's necessary, causing irreparable harm. *Ban police forces in Connecticut from using military equipment.*

Did you have a police officer in your school as a child? If you did, did it ever once make you feel safer? If we as a society think that a tank top will distract other students from focusing on their learning, how can we possibly expect an armed police officer to be a productive addition to the school setting? We need our schools to be a place of learning and growth and self-discovery for our future generation! Hire teachers, guidance counselors, and social workers that are there to teach children and shape them into safe, strong, positive members of society. We need to shape and reward their successes instead of punishing mistakes. *Remove police officers from Connecticut schools.*

Finally, if you're going to discuss true accountability, which you've used in the title of your bill, then you need *full* accountability. Qualified immunity was created in order to prevent government officials from being deterred from acting in split-second situations, according to the U.S. Supreme Court. But imagine the lives that could've been saved and the harm that could've been prevented if our police forces took even two seconds to think through their response instead of one. Nobody should be allowed to do irreversible harm without having to think about it beforehand. *Follow Colorado's lead and allow plaintiffs to bypass qualified immunity.*

I appreciate you taking the time to hear and read testimony on this important and potentially groundbreaking bill. I truly hope that you will fully prioritize the health and safety of our residents when reaching a resolution. In order to truly help those that you were elected to serve, we need to be proactive and find the best long term solution, not slap a colorful Band-Aid on it to simply hide a wound.

Sincerely,
Jill Edbrooke