

To the Co-Chairs and Members of the Judiciary Committee: Testimony re: LCO 3471 AAC
Police Accountability

Submitted by Joseph Gaylin, Stop Solitary CT

To co-chairs Senator Gary Winfield and Representative Steven Stafstrom, and to the esteemed members of the Judiciary committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the draft of An Act Concerning Police Accountability. Today, I am speaking as a member of the steering committee of Stop Solitary CT, an organization dedicated to ending the use of solitary confinement, a practice often condemned as akin to torture.

I urge you to pass An Act Concerning Police Accountability. However, a number of provisions must be added to the current draft of the legislation in order to substantively hold the criminal legal system accountable to the citizens of Connecticut:

1. The draft bill would ban practices that inflict wanton and unnecessary violence during police stops. Indeed, banning these practices is long overdue, but similar practices-- such as chokeholds, in-cell restraints, and solitary confinement-- must also be banned in the Department of Correction.
2. The draft bill would eliminate qualified immunity for police officers. This component of the legislation is essential; however, the abolition of qualified immunity must be extended to correctional officers.
3. The draft bill would call for the creation of an Inspector General appointed by the Chief State's Attorney. An Inspector General directly connected to the State's Attorney is still beholden to the interests of the police. The Office of the Inspector General must be entirely independent from the police and must also be charged with monitoring and investigating correctional officers.

Correctional officers and police officers are two sides of the same coin. I urge the legislature to An Act Concerning Police Accountability; however, the bill's silence on correctional accountability is damning.

Thank you for your work on this legislation.

Black Lives Matter.

Incarcerated Lives Matter.