

I would like to convey my concerns over the Police Accountability Act. While I understand that Friday is a listening session, I would like to voice my concerns over the following proposed areas:

-Changes to the legal standard for justified use of deadly force. This change in standard would create an environment where officers would be dangerously questioning their actions when a split second decision is needed. The police officers on the street should be relying on their instinct and their training to ensure they get to get home at the end of their shifts. Here in CT we have some of the most highly trained officers in the world, but we still have officers die because of the actions of criminals. Please consider this when it comes time to vote on this bill.

-Section 41, Qualified Immunity- Changes to this would have current and future police officer either leaving the profession or not even consider choosing the profession. There is already a shortage of qualified candidates in this state. There is so much liability involved with being a police officer. To go to work without the protection of qualified immunity would create an environment where Police Officers would be afraid to do their jobs. Each decision would be a struggle between possibly losing everything you worked so hard for to provide to yourself and your family and catching bad guys. It does not give the officers the protection they need to put the communities they work for ahead of their own and their family's security.

-Section 12 task force- Where is the incentive to put community first if I have to purchase and worry about claims against my own professional liability insurance that I am responsible for and like my auto or home policy, do not want claims filed against me. The ability to work overtime keeps a lot of very qualified people in this profession who are smart enough to go work in other high paying jobs. The decision to hire police officers for private duty should rest with the individual cities or towns and how they want their law enforcement resources utilized.

-Section 3, Post already wields a lot of power in the law enforcement community here in CT. To have them involved in disciplinary action of employees all over the state seems impractical and these matters would be best left up to the individual departments who know and understand their personnel way more than someone sitting in an office in Meriden.

-Section 16 - Given the passage of the Mental Health bill last year, PA 19-17 that requires all police Departments to adopt policies and programs to support the mental wellness of police officers, this section is unnecessary and confusing. It could harm the progress that has been made with respect to getting officers the help that they may need early on through Early Intervention Programs. Again, the outcry for these broad changes are on a national level. In Connecticut, we are already taking steps (PA 19-17) because there was a recognized need. Please don't abandon something already in place because of a national outcry where these mental health issue proposals do not even exist in theory yet.

Civilian review Boards are a bad idea. Civilians do not have the same training or knowledge base that Police Officers have. It would be unrealistic to train certain civilians in how the Police operate to a proficiency where they could make qualified decisions regarding actions taken by an officer on the street. This already evident in Police Commissions across the state, where you have commissioners making decisions for police officers and departments based upon their life experience. Unless you were a police officer as a career and get an appointment upon retirement, I would say making decisions for a Police Department is difficult. Nevermind civilians with no job experience or training making reviews of police actions that were based upon life experience and the extensive training we receive as police officers here in CT.

I have been a Police Officer for almost 30 years. I am proud to have served and will continue to serve my community in what I consider one of the noblest careers out there. Police Officers in Connecticut are highly trained and continue to receive training on a constant basis, especially in accredited departments. I urge you to "listen" today, but caution you to not get caught up in the national outcry for reform. Police Officers/Departments in Connecticut operate 24/7 and are expected to function at a certain level of professionalism. Unfortunately, this is not the standard across the country. Let the rest of the country catch up to where we are here in Connecticut and the country will be a much better place with that reform. Thank you for taking the time to read this and feel free to contact me at 860-841-7083.

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