

Good day,

This email is to serve as my written testimony in opposition to draft bill LCO #3471.

At this time the legislative body has a historic opportunity to bring meaningful and lasting change to our judicial system. This bill, as proposed, does none of that and makes the citizens of Connecticut less safe. Many in the law enforcement community are open and willing to make changes so all of those we swore to serve and protect feel they are in fact safe, protected and served equally under our watch. This bill does nothing to address the inequality of our judicial system past the initial encounter with law enforcement. This is a disservice to the people you intend to protect.

There are several issues with the bill as proposed with some of the more glaring issues being the removal of consent. It is a longstanding and tried exception to the search warrant requirement under the 4th Amendment that people may give a knowledgeable and voluntary consent of their person and property. Is it your belief that the citizens of Connecticut can not make a knowledgeable and voluntary consent so you removed that decision for them? This seems like an elitist approach and a veiled way of saying, "We know what's best for you and you are not smart enough to think for yourself so we just won't let you think." And making the burden to search "probable cause" goes above and beyond any established legal requirement.

Forcing department to return, sell, transfer or otherwise dispose items required under the 1033 program puts the officers and the communities at risk. How quickly you have forgotten those young souls lost in Newtown. It is equipment acquired under the 1033 program that allows officers to respond and effectively handle those very types of incidents.

A small local department in the greater Waterbury area has two openings for police officer and received zero applications for them. Remove qualified immunity and that dire situation will be seen throughout the state. Imagine going to work and knowing half the people you encounter will most likely not be happy with the outcome of that encounter. No matter how well you do your job as prescribed by your employer and the state someone isn't going to be happy with you. Now, with that feeling they have a perceived slight based on that encounter. That person can now sue you civilly and you are forced to pay to defend yourself for simply doing your job. Qualified immunity is already foregone in the egregious situations or those of federal rights violations. Do not force officer to decide whether or not they want to protect the citizens you sworn to represent based on whether they can defend a false and frivolous law suit. Thank you.

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Watertown