

Kristen M. Clark
New Britain, Connecticut

Dear Judiciary Committee,

My name is [Kristen Clark and I am a Connecticut resident. I call on Connecticut's General Assembly to adopt the following legislative measures to ensure that police officers live up to their oath to protect and serve and I am writing to share my support for "An Act Concerning Police Accountability."

Specifically, I am writing to support the following:

- Granting power that allows municipalities to establish Civilian Review Boards with Subpoena powers.
- Outlawing police searches without probable cause, even if the person consents to the search
- Outlawing police offers from asking for any documents (such as green cards, other immigration documents) other than a driver's license from people they pull-over during traffic stops
- Mandating a duty to intervene if a police officer witnesses another officer using excessive or illegal use-of-force
- Ending qualified immunity for officers who violate people's civil rights
- Banning stop-and-frisk in Connecticut
- The demilitarization of Connecticut police departments, including the disposal of all military equipment currently held by police departments
- The requirement for police officers to prominently display their badge I also want to highlight the components of the bill I disagree with, which include:
 - Increasing funding for police departments, whether municipal or state.
 - Possibly adding social workers to police departments. Social workers should be used for certain emergency/mental health calls but they should not work under police departments
 - The overrepresentation of police officers and politicians on the Police Officer Standards and Training Council. They make up 12/20 of the Council's membership. This council should be dominated by civilians, not politicians or police officers. (See below)

And in reviewing the bill the following areas need some additional provisions:

- **OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL - SECTION 33:** *(1) Creates the Office of the Inspector General which is charged with conducting investigations of peace officers involved in use of force cases, prosecuting police officers who use unjustified use of force, prosecuting cases in which an officer failed to intervene or failed report an incident of not justified or excessive force, and making recommendations to POSTC concerning reprimands, suspensions, renewals, cancelation, or revocation of peace officer certification. CHIEF STATE'S ATTORNEY SHOULD NOT BE NOMINATING CANDIDATES AND SHOULD NOT HAVE THE POWER TO FIRE THE INSPECTOR GENERAL. A BETTER SYSTEM WOULD BE CREATING A SPECIAL DEPUTY CHIEF STATE'S ATTORNEY WHO FUNCTIONS AS THE INSPECTOR GENERAL WHO ONLY ANSWERS TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION.*
- **CHOKEHOLD BAN - SECTION 29:** *(1) Chokeholds only justified when police employee believes it necessary to defend against imminent deadly physical force. THE LANGUAGE AS DRAFTED DOES NOT BAN CHOKEHOLDS OUTRIGHT.*
- **USE OF FORCE DEFINITION - SECTION 29:** *(1) Explicitly requires that the use of physical force be objectively reasonable under the circumstance -- if not acting in self-defense or defense of others, the police employee must exhaust all reasonable alternatives, believe that the use of force doesn't create a substantial risk of injury to third parties, and reasonably believes the use of force to be necessary. THE LANGUAGE AS DRAFTED DOES NOT MEANINGFULLY CHANGE THE EXISTING USE OF FORCE DEFINITION. THE LANGUAGE AS DRAFTED MAINTAINS A REASONABLENESS STANDARD THAT IS NOT AS STRONG AS A NECESSARY STANDARD.*
- **BODY AND DASHBOARD CAMERAS - SECTION 19:** *(1) Mandates that all police officers must wear body-worn recording equipment and all police vehicle's must have dashboard cameras. THIS MANDATE IS A MULTI MILLION DOLLAR INVESTMENT IN POLICING THROUGH OPM'S GRANT-IN-AID FUNDS WITH NO CLEAR QUALIFYING STANDARDS. IF WE ARE GOING TO GIVE COPS MORE MONEY THEN THE INVESTMENT MUST*

REQUIRE POLICE DEPARTMENTS TO COMPLY WITH EXISTING DATA REPORTING ON TRAFFIC STOPS AND USE OF FORCE REPORTS AS REQUIRED BY LAW.

This is an areas where I feel that the bill has missed the mark:

- **POLICE OFFICER STANDARDS AND TRAINING COUNCIL – SECTIONS 3- 13: THE LANGUAGE IN GENERAL SETS POSTC TO FUNCTION AS A STATEWIDE PROFESSIONAL LICENSING BOARD BUT THEY DO NOT HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF A COMMITMENT TO HOLDING POLICE OFFICERS AND POLICE DEPARTMENTS ACCOUNTABLE. ADDITIONALLY, A MAJORITY OF THE COUNCIL’S VOTES (12/20) ARE CONTROLLED BY EITHER POLICE CHIEFS OR SWORN OFFICERS.**

Lastly, the bill does not deal with and change the term limits of states attorneys. Term limits should be changed from 8 years to 4 years. There should also be some increased accountability for State’s Attorneys as they do not technically have a boss to answer to. The Chief State’s Attorney has limited ability to address performance and or workplace grievances issues.

I applaud the work that the committee has taken to raise a bill of this nature here in Connecticut. Thank you for your time in reviewing the various aspects of the bill that I agree with and those that are areas for improvement. Now is the time for Connecticut to pass meaningful police reform legislation. While we appreciate hearings and resolutions, we need comprehensive measures enacted and additional time for public comment on this bill. We need meaningful legislation to protect Black communities from the systemic perils of over-policing, police brutality, misconduct, and harassment, and end the impunity with which officers operate in taking the lives of Black people. It is your moral and ethical duty to ensure Black people and communities are free from the harm and threats from law enforcement and to curtail state-sanctioned police violence and militarized police responses. I firmly believe that Racism is a Public Health Issue and police brutality and qualified immunity have enabled individual officers to operate un-checked. This bill takes us one step forward to course-correcting systems that have disproportionally oppressed people of color.

Thank you for your consideration.

Thanks,

Kristen M. Clark

"If my mind can conceive it, and my heart can believe it, then I can achieve it."- Muhammad Ali

"Remember... to lead the Orchestra, you must turn your back on the Crowd. Dare to be different"