

Support for LOC 347: An Act Concerning Policy Accountability Bill

My name is Linda Harris and I live and vote in Manchester CT. I am a member of the African American and Black Affairs and Uniting for a Safe and Inclusive Community. I am writing in support of LCO #3471: An Act Concerning Police Accountability (AACPA) with amendments.

I support most sections of LCO 3471 and strongly advocate for strengthening the infrastructure and mechanisms for police accountability in Connecticut. I specifically advocate for:

Section 7- Implicit Bias training Strengthening implicit bias training for state and municipal law enforcement is critical, and must also include substantive, evidence-informed anti-racism training. Implicit bias training does not go far enough. Both implicit bias and anti-racism training must be informed by research and must be rigorously evaluated. Training on these topics must be included as a required training within annual professional development.

Section 8 & 9- Collective Bargaining and Public Records All complaints, internal affairs' reviews, and personnel records of officers against whom complaints have been made by civilians, should be subject to FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) for full transparency. As officers frequently leave one police department to work in another it is important that their collective records are accessible to the public to provide a complete picture of an officer's interactions with individuals.

Section 14- Police Badge and Name Tag Identification Officers must be required to prominently display their badge and name tag.

Section 17- Civilian Review Board It is critical that municipalities have a civilian review board with subpoena power and full investigative powers. This legislation should go beyond allowing CRBs and require municipal CRBs with subpoena power. Without subpoena powers a civilian review board can only function as a rubber stamp after the conclusion of the investigative findings.

Section 19 & 20 Body Cameras and Dashboard Cameras National outcomes on the efficacy of body cameras are mixed. Without accountability around body cameras being turned on and used, body cameras are not effective in providing true transparency or actual accountability. Body cameras should be triggered when the officer leaves their vehicle, by weapons release and have retroactive recapture capabilities. There must also be consequences for not turning body cameras on or off or else the investment into this technology and video storage is not well spent.

Sections 21 & 22- Prohibition on Consent Searches Connecticut must ban all stop and frisk related policies and outlaw police searches without probable cause, even if consent is offered. Police officers are frequently intimidating, and civilians consent out of fear. Section 21- Prohibition on Consent Searches Connecticut must outlaw police officers from asking for any documents other than a driver's license at traffic stops. Asking for non-driving related identification is unnecessary and puts many community members at risk.

Section 30- Officers' Duty to Intervene to Stop Use of Excessive Force It is important that officers are mandated to intervene when they witness excessive force and that when officers intervene, they do not face retaliation from other police officers.

Section 30- Office of Inspector General Establishing the Office of Inspector General is an important step in building the necessary infrastructure for independent investigations into use of force and other police

misconduct. Police accountability is not possible without independent investigative entities at the state and municipal levels. There needs to be a dedicated office. The current system allows prosecutors who might work with a police department to provide testimony in one case to investigate the same department for wrongdoing. These familial relationships can lead to biases and impact an objective finding of liability of the officers and the department.

Section 41- Civil cause of action against certain police officers. Qualified immunity for police officers who violate civil rights and perpetrate violence against civilians must end. Police officers must be held accountable for their misconduct. Just as physicians must carry the liability for malpractice, so must police officers in our state. Corrections officers should also be included in this section of the legislation. Officer are held to a standard to protect the health and safety of those they interact. Officers who violate this trust should be held accountable and pay the penalty incurred for abusing the power intrinsic when wearing the badge.

You have an opportunity to pass strong legislation that will make Connecticut safer for all our residents, especially us, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) residents. Please amend and pass LCO 3471 An Act Concerning Police Accountability

Thanks,

Linda Harris

60 Brookfield St. Manchester, CT 06040

African American and Black Affairs Council

Uniting for a Safe and Inclusive Community