



July 16, 2020

**Testimony of Louise Pyers, M.S.  
Before the Judiciary Committee  
Regarding LCO No. 3471: Police Accountability  
July 16, 2020**

Dear Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Louise Pyers, the Criminal Justice Project Director at NAMI Connecticut. I am writing to you with concerns regarding Section 18 of the Police Accountability Bill.

Section 18 calls for police departments to study the feasibility of partnering with social workers to respond to calls for assistance where the experience of a social worker could provide assistance. Connecticut already has an established police/mental health partnership which is funded by the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. The Connecticut Alliance to Benefit Law Enforcement (CABLE) has been providing Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training to police and clinicians for the past 20 years with great success. Many police departments already have these partnerships in place. They have been proven to work by connecting people in crisis to community based services instead of arrest in many cases. We do not need another costly study to tell us what we already know. What we need instead is funding to expand the CIT program and community based services while also investing in a more responsive mental health system.

Sincerely,

Louise C. Pyers, M.S.  
Newington