



**Luke A. Bronin**  
**Mayor**

July 17, 2020

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas, and members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on **LCO No. 3471**, An Act Concerning Police Accountability.

First, I want to thank the leadership of this Committee for their careful, thoughtful, bipartisan work to develop this broad, structural set of reforms to policing in the State of Connecticut. Overall, I support the legislation and I am grateful for their leadership and recognition of the need to enact consequential reforms.

I would like to highlight three sections in particular that I believe to be critically important.

First, Section 3 of this legislation strengthens the authority of the Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST-C), and it lays out various standards that allow POST-C to revoke the statewide certification of police officers. I believe that this provision is particularly important, as the removal of officers whose conduct renders them unfit for service is essential to maintaining community trust, creating an internal culture of accountability, and preventing serious misconduct. In Hartford, as in many communities, our Police Department has been compelled to re-hire officers fired for significant misconduct. This proposal would go a long way to addressing that problem.

Second, Section 17 would grant subpoena power to Civilian Police Review Boards. In Hartford, we are moving forward with a range of new police accountability measures, including measures to strengthen our Civilian Police Review Board (CPRB) by giving it full-time, professional staff, the authority to contest and override disciplinary findings made by the Chief of Police, and subpoena power, if authorized in state law. I therefore appreciate the committee's decision to include the authorization of subpoena power for CPRBs.

Third, Section 18 of this legislation would require each municipal police department to "complete an evaluation of the feasibility and potential impact of the use of social workers by the department for the purpose of remotely responding to calls for assistance, responding in person to such calls or accompanying a police officer on calls where the experience and training of a social worker could provide assistance." The City of Hartford recently announced its intention to build a Civilian Crisis Response Team, as contemplated in this section. In the coming months, we will be engaging in the design process to determine the most effective way of building and operating such a team. We believe that, if the same evaluation is conducted statewide, we would benefit tremendously from the shared process. At a very small scale, we have an existing model for such a team, in the form of the mobile crisis response unit operated by Capital Region Mental Health, within the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I strongly encourage the General Assembly to not only require municipalities to evaluate the feasibility of such civilian response teams, but to consider expanding funding for such efforts in the next legislative session.

I hope Connecticut will be a national leader in police accountability by passing strong legislation. We have a great deal of work to do at the local level, but a bold step at the state level will help us improve policing in every part of Connecticut and send a strong message to our residents that we want fair, effective, accountable police departments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke A. Bronin", is written over a horizontal line.

Luke A. Bronin  
Mayor

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