

Hello,

I would like to comment on the Police Accountability Bill as it is currently Drafted (I am not sure of the number as I found it hard to locate online).

1. Regarding footage/film from body and dashboard cameras, I didn't see any language about:
 1. the access civilians have to the images
 2. the length of time the images are stored and by whom.

I believe there must be language in the bill to provide reasonable and appropriate access to the films by civilians. On the news we often see families fighting to have footage released for them to view, and that shouldn't happen, it should be available to them within a reasonable time frame, perhaps 48 hours after an incident. If no language is added, cameras will be of no use as police will keep the footage to themselves, especially if it is incriminating to them, which we have seen occur already in certain cases.

2. Language regarding "Duty to Intervene in use of Excessive Force" should be expanded to include
 1. a "duty to report" any illegal activity knowingly performed by an officer, as well as
 2. to report any activity that is against police department regulations.

This would impact (planting of or tampering with evidence, turning off cameras, falsifying what took place during an incident, etc.). People of color often face this problem on a daily basis, and it can lead to the detainment or the incarceration of innocent people. Even if people are later released, the impact of these situations is extremely damaging to families of color.

3. Regarding Civilian Review Boards, what power, if any, would they have if created at the town level? Of would they be, when, finding problems helpless, as they would have no way to require compliance with recommendations of, or demands of review for, decommissioning, or the initiation of an official investigation, etc.?

4. I believe that language should be added to prevent arrests for antiquated/obsolete laws and regulations, tracking those that occur for review by an outside or community based review board, and that these be able to be challenged by a civilian review board at the state level. If a department has too many of these ridiculous arrests or ticketing, some action must be taken against the department to end the practice. The laws should also be noted for removal from the legal codes.

5. Language should be added that prevents police from using traffic or other tickets (that are challenged in court) as a way to get overtime pay. This is common way police departments increase take home pay for their officers. It should be required that these are recorded and reviewed quarterly and a department with too many challenged (and lost) cases for motor vehicle violations should have action taken against it. Again, an independent review board should see the number of these tickets and the number of cases won or lost including how it impacted overtime pay. Perhaps these tickets could even be handled by non-police staff, especially with film and or photos from body and dashboard cameras.

6. Language should be added that prevents harassment in police academies and requires duty to report without reprisal, offering protection and even commendation when reports are made (eg. with POST training and any police academy programs (before becoming a law enforcement officer)). It is often in this environment that officers learn not to report problems because if they do, they become the target. When I learn about the way they are trained in some departments, it sadly reminds me of the programming of terrorists who are told "they are trying to kill you, they think you are a XXX. We will

protect you and we protect each other, no one else will” type message. We can see officers acting in that way I’m on my way as they encounter peaceful protestors. In some departments, police would benefit from a “deprogramming” of sorts from their violent training, so that they can again see that it’s not us vs. them, but rather, them working with us to keep everyone safe.

7. Similar to item 6, Once an officer in training becomes certified, the department training environments should not allow an Us Vs. Them mentality to develop, no films of officers being killed or hurt playing on a loop while they are told that they are at war. Instead, their role as protectors of all of the community should be the message. This message should also be shared with the greater community so we all view the role of the police in a similar way.

8. Can language be added that police responding to non-violent situations not have a gun on their person, but rather locked in their car? Lots of countries have this policy. Why do you need a gun on your hip to show up to take a report about a rape, assault or stolen television?

9. I recommend that the state look into traffic cameras as a way to monitor speeding regulation as well as in-town traffic laws. Why use the valuable resource of an officer (with a gun, taser, pepper spray and night stick), stopping someone who went through a stop sign, when the ticket from a traffic camera should deter them. If police feel that traffic stops are unsafe (as I hear they often do), then let's remove them from that duty and be more even and fair about it.

While some are concerned about the cost to tax-payor for making these changes, It seems that we pay quite a bit in the processing and jailing of innocent people, to say nothing of the cost to human dignity and in some cases, human life. For me, those costs far outweigh the tax bill.

In conclusion, these important and very much needed policy changes must occur, and work hand in hand with changes to housing zoning regulations, education equity and employment equity. Folks would eventually stop seeing people of color as a threat when our systems and laws stop working to support that false narrative. Until then, we must legislate equity, fairness, truthful and appropriate behavior.

Thank you for your work and for your swift attention to this most important issue.