

I am writing you over concerns with certain provisions of the proposed Police Reform Bill. It's important to know that I am a retired fire department Captain (New Britain) with eight police officers in my family including my son. I want you to know that the eight members of my family have well over 100 years of service as police officers and not a one of was ever charged with police brutality and they all managed to get home at the end of each and every day of their service without firing their weapon at anyone. I've listed my concerns below:

- Section 41: Removing the protections of Qualified Immunity under the stated circumstances would put police officers and their families at risk due for each and every arrest that they make. The removal of Qualified Immunity will be a declaration of an open season against police departments and their officers across the state. Each and every time an officer arrests an alleged perpetrator they will be subject to being sued and forced to protect themselves and their families against any accusations regardless of their veracity and there will be no shortage of lawyers who will be willing to file the suits. To believe otherwise is simply wrong. Supporting this provision would put my family, your family, and every other family in the state at risk. What intelligent person would put themselves and their families at risk to protect us knowing that they are fully exposed to losing their homes and livelihood?
- Sections 8 and 9: A part of every officers day is the knowledge that each and every time they so much as write a ticket, they are likely to have the person who receives the ticket file a retaliatory complaint of some kind. Consequently, the file of any officer who is doing their job contains complaints filed by people who they've arrested or given traffic violations. Many of them frivolous. Opening the officers file up to the public will most certainly have adverse consequences on every officers ability to do their job. Under current law and police procedure, an officers actions are scrutinized every time they perform an arrest or issue a traffic violation and I can assure you that officers are acutely aware that their actions are being monitored by the public and the department leadership on a daily basis. The passage of this provision would allow officers to be systematically targeted by disgruntled citizens who they've arrested or ticketed. This coupled with the removal of Qualified Immunity will most certainly subject them to retaliatory lawsuits and harassment.
- Sections 21 and 22: Banning Consent searches of vehicles after a "routine" traffic violation. Current law prohibits the search of a vehicle without probable cause or the operators permission to search. I'm not sure how far reaching this would be but a call to any Chief of any police department would confirm their feeling on the subject. The number of arrests of serious felons based on crimes discovered during routine traffic violations would be an important statistic to research prior to enacting such a bill.

As stated above, we have eight police officers in the family. Their service extends well back into the early sixties. Today's police officers are subject to laws, standards, policies, programs, and procedures that no other profession that I know of are subject to. The current system of accreditation for a given police department is extremely thorough and monitored and run by professionals. These people put themselves on the line for us on a daily basis. Do we really want to hinder their ability to protect us while putting their lives and livelihoods at risk? Please understand that such laws as stated above if passed as proposed will most certainly put their lives and our lives at additional risk.

As stated above, I'm not an uninformed citizen. I served the city of New Britain as a fire fighter for 21 years. I worked closely with police officers over those 21 years and still count many of them as friends and as stated above, I have 8 police officers in my family. I urge you to review the 2019 FBI's report on Officer Line of Duty deaths and/or the 2019 Officer Down Memorial Page. You'll find that 48 police officers were murdered in the line of duty last year. Then ask yourself why no one is marching for them and why no one is proposing any laws to protect them.

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