

Letter regarding: An Act Concerning Police Accountability Bill #3471

July 17, 2020

Dear Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for your time in reading the following letter. As a citizen of our great state, I implore you to consider my serious concerns about Bill #3471 and what it means for my family's safety, and the safety of all families in CT, specifically around the issues of eliminating **qualified immunity, consensual searches** and narrowing the **types of force** available to subdue a resistant individual.

Does Connecticut have a high percentage of excessive force and/or police brutality cases that warrants these changes? If so, **how does #3471 positively affect change in those areas?**

I feel my aforementioned concerns of Bill 3471 continue to erode the public perception of law enforcement officers while hindering their ability to prevent crime.

A police officer who is not protected by qualified immunity, I imagine, will be less likely to protect themselves or others for fear of being sued. What criminal escapes, or in what horrible situation, where every nanosecond can have life or death consequences, will we see those who swear to serve and protect second guess their decision to intervene? I pray no one I love is there when that happens.

The inability to perform *consensual* search can only increase criminal activity. How many drugs and weapons have been seized by officers as a result of consensual searches? How many impaired drivers have been stopped before causing an accident? What kinds of criminals, *actual criminals*, have been brought into custody as a result of these searches? I would love to have access to that data, and I hope those numbers are presented to you before you make your final decision.

The terms "choke hold" and "arm-bar" sound terrifying, but as a former wrestler and Judo player and current jiu-jitsu student, I can tell you how effective those moves can be in de-escalation, especially against a more physically imposing opponent. Without those tactics, what's left? The baton? A fist? A boot? A gun? Instead of eliminating these holds, we should be training officers better, and training citizens better about what to do when approached by a police officer. What efforts are being made there?

I don't envy your position. I am not naive, and I know the visions of police brutality that inundate us call for action on a state and national level, but I honestly do not see how Bill 3471 makes a real and lasting change to ending racism or repairing the relationship between police and citizens. That's what this bill is attempting to do isn't it?

I am a victim of violent crime. It happened out of state twenty years ago, but it was scary and has had a lasting psychological effect on me. One thing that helped me feel whole again was watching police officers pick me up, still bleeding from my encounter, put me in a cruiser and track down two of the three assailants less than an hour after being attacked. A few months later they found the third guy (I imagine consensual search played a part in his capture) and I was able to testify at the grand jury

against them. They were brought to justice. If those cops hadn't been able to do their job, and those guys were left unchecked, I wonder who they would have assaulted next.

For the record, **I am in favor of body cameras.**

I was born and raised in Connecticut, I work as a teacher in our public school system, and in my forty-two years, this is the very first time I am reaching out to my State Representatives. I hope that illustrates my urgency regarding this matter.

Thank you again. I will continue to pray for you and our country. We Nutmeggers are strong, we can do more to bridge our communities together than what this bill seeks to do.

As you consider your decision, think about my two young boys. As a parent nothing is more sacred to me than their safety. If police officers are not able to protect them effectively, who will?

Sincerely,

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