

To whom it may concern;

My name is Michael Weaver, I am a resident and homeowner in the Town of Newtown. I am married and have two small children, one of which will be entering the Newtown Public School system next month. I am also a public servant. I am currently and have been a Police Officer for the past 8 + years. Like all officers, I have sworn an oath to the constitution, to protect the public, and uphold the values of the community I serve.

I am writing you to address the Police Reform Bill. Connecticut has always been ahead of the curve and has maintained the highest standards for our law enforcement.

This bill does not have the best interest of the people of Connecticut. There are many issues but I'd like to mention a few.

Changing deadly physical force ultimately makes it impractical and unsafe for an officer to protect themselves or someone else from the threat of serious physical injury or death. Case law has shown that an officer presence alone is a show of force. The way the bill is written "any of the officer's conduct led to an increased risk of the situation that led up to the use of such force." Well if an officer shows up and their simply being there predicates a response which leads to the use of deadly physical force... can you see how this is a problem? Plus, who determines what is objectively reasonable? This bill is simply criminalizing officers for doing their job.

De-militarizing police or their military like tools? Has everyone forgotten about the countless tragedies that have occurred in Connecticut? I sleep well at night knowing I have well trained and properly equipped officers that can respond to incidents such as Sandy Hook. This bill will remove that security blanket the officers are able to provide.

Limited Qualified Immunity? Creating solutions to problems that do not exist is not the answer. Limiting Qualified immunity and forcing professional liability insurance on officers or their municipalities only financial strains officers and tax payers. Officer retention and hiring has been at an all time low as it is.

With this Bill, who can we expect to be putting on the uniform? As I've stated, I've sworn an oath of which Officers uphold throughout our personal and professional lives. The cost of this commitment is immeasurable stress, low pay, unnatural hours, and lack of support from the public and our leadership, among many other things. Ultimately our commitment and sacrifice could be paid with our lives. Who will take the job when officers are not only asked to give their life, but also the security of their families, not to mention the misguided public scrutiny officers currently face.

Countless Officers will choose to retire or quit. This Bill is flawed and does not represent what it best for the citizens of Connecticut. The items in this bill represent the desires of few and the majority of Connecticut citizens appreciate our Police and value their lives and safety.

To place liability on officers who are asked to sacrifice so much, to make life changing decisions in an instant, based only on the facts presented to them at that moment, their training, and good faith they are upholding the law and their oath, have you asked where the liability resides with legislators, judges, and prosecutors? Officers may simply choose not to be forced to make those calls, and that will ultimately hurt the public and amplify public distrust.

Please look at what is happening to NYC, our close neighbor, and learn from their mistakes. Countless people are leaving NY. Do not jeopardize the safety of the people of the state I love and serve.

I hope and believe that you, our Legislators, do the right thing and vote NO if you really do represent the best interest of both the citizens of Connecticut and the American people. This bill was rushed to legislation under the false narrative of an “emergency”.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this and hope you will do the right thing.

Best Regards,
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