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First I must add that I am currently a police officer in CT. I believe much of this bill would be detrimental to public safety and it would hurt the most vulnerable and indigent populations.

In regards to the change in Use of Force guidelines:

The Graham v Connor standard, set by the US Supreme Court, has only allowed officers to act within REASON, understanding that incidents are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving. Officers must act REASONABLY within this standard, which is based on a reasonably trained officer. To change the standard to 'justified', and requiring ALL other reasonable options to be exhausted, would be unfairly judging officers after the fact from the benefit of attorneys offices without the inherent fear and human emotion that goes into a dangerous or deadly encounter and the training that has been given. Officers do not have the benefit of time and distance at times and sometimes need to quickly react to the actions and situations presented to them. Police Officers are human beings. They have emotions. They bleed. They die. They have families and want to go home to them each day. To force them to second guess their use of force at the critical moment when they CAN NOT hesitate, trying to go through a laundry list of others options that could be taken, will result in officers reacting too slowly in fear of prosecution and ultimately getting hurt or killed unnecessarily. I swore an oath to serve and protect. I DID NOT swear an oath to die or be hurt unnecessarily. And who would judge a 'reasonable alternative'? How can you train for every type of situation and what else can be done to every type of violent or unknown incident? The answer is you can't. To pass a law that would force officers to hesitate more than they already do because of malicious prosecutions will lead to a serious decline in officers as professionals and lead inherently to more crime, as we are seeing in NYC, Atlanta, LA, etc etc. Forcing Officers to second guess themselves during critical moments will do nothing more than limit pro activity, which has been proven to lower crime, and unnecessarily second guess every officers decision after the fact with 'why didn't you instead' scenarios, which the officer may not have had the luxury to think of at the moment. If an Officers' use of force would not be reasonable based on laws, policies and training, they are held accountable more than ever before as it is. We (the police) need the backing of the legislature, who should be commending officers for willing to voluntarily run in to the most dangerous situations for any and all people, while still holding them accountable to a reasonable degree.

Regarding Qualified Immunity:

First we should look at what Officers Qualified Immunity means. It protects Officers from civil liability when their actions are reasonable at the time based on current laws and policies in place, or where the Officer would have reasonably believed at the time that his/her actions were reasonable at the time.

So eliminating Qualified Immunity would mean if an officer was following the current laws and policies, they could still be liable to for their actions? This simply takes the responsibility off of policy makers and law makers from making reasonable laws and policies, because now the officer can be sued instead. Is that reasonable to do to the people that are just trying to protect and serve their community with honor? Is it fair to make police lose everything they earn because they legitimately were trying to do the right thing, it was reasonable to believe they believed they were doing the right thing, but they still should be held accountable for toeing the line of civil order and chaos? It seems this is a knee-jerk reaction to appease the small portion of the public making noise.

Ultimately this will cause great hesitation not only from engaging the community but from hiring officers in general. NYC has an increase of 411% in retirements. Atlanta Officers aren't showing up for work. We have a tough time finding reasonable people to do this job as it is, now add to it they are held to an unreasonable 'perfect' standard and you will find the communities who call the police most often (statistically the poor or minority communities) will have a serious increase of victimization of innocents who make up a majority of these communities.

I love this profession and I want to continue to serve my community as I have for over 10 years. But laws like this would make me, as well as many of my hard working coworkers, find new employment where I am not in fear of being sued and/or killed based on unreasonable working conditions.

Sent from my iPhone

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