

My name is Nancy Mahmoud and I live in Westport, CT. I am writing to ask that the police accountability law be adopted and passed into law. I urge my friends and neighbors to join me in my request.

I previously worked as an indigent criminal defense attorney in NYC and have witnessed first hand police officers over stretching and abusing their authority.

Cops routinely abused or intentionally picked fights with young, black and brown teenagers in order to justify an arrest so that they would have enough "bodies" for line ups prior to an arraignment, when legal counsel is not required for line ups. I have witnessed a police officer arrest a 17 year old grocery delivery boy for riding his bike on the sidewalk when he was locking up the bike in order to deliver his groceries. Then, after the arrest, the police officers stole the young boy's delivery money and threw him into a line up for murder - which they knew he did not commit. They subjected this young boy to a night in the "pen" with grown men (some of whom were criminals) simply because they required more bodies for a line up for a murder when they had the suspect already in custody. And again, they did this because the law does not require legal counsel to be present at a line up prior to the official arraignment of the suspect. This young boy lost his mother to cancer and his father to street violence and was supporting his Jamaican immigrant grandmother with the money he earned from delivering groceries after school. I represented this young boy as his indigent criminal counsel at his arraignment and the only charge the police had against him was riding a bike on the sidewalk. White people never get arrested for minor grievances such as this. Furthermore, in NYC where else (other than the sidewalk) would you park your bike to ensure it's safekeeping until you get back from your grocery delivery?? The cops knew this and waited at the grocery store for him to come out and followed him until he got on the sidewalk, knowing he would do so.

While bad cops are a minority, they inflict a great deal of damage in the communities in which they serve and make it more difficult for good cops to patrol our streets safely.

As a licensed attorney, grievances can be filed against me and if I am found to have committed a violation I can be publicly sanctioned by the State Bar Association, fined and even lose my ability to practice law permanently. I believe that any arm of law enforcement should be held to the same standard. Police officers represent the law just as attorneys do. In fact, In some ways, they are the first face of the law.

When I represented indigent populations, I have been subjected to verbal abuse by clients, urination and one time a client even attempted to strike me. However, I had to remain calm and carry myself with professionalism. If I am expected to do that by the State Bar Association, police should be held to the same standard. They represent the law just as I do.

Nurses are in a similar predicament dealing with patients who are mentally ill or intoxicated. Yet, they too can also be sanctioned, fined, sued or punished for poor behavior. Cops should not be allowed to behave egregiously or wantonly without little to no repercussions.

I urge you to adopt a police accountability bill to help make both our communities and police officers safer.

Kind regards,
Nancy Mahmoud

Sent from my iPhone