

July 20, 2020

Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I'm writing to you today as the daughter of a retired Westchester County, NY Police Officer, who was permanently disabled due to an accident while on duty. He shattered two discs in his back while trying to help an elderly woman who was in distress. He was in pain for the rest of his life and was limited as to the activities he could perform. Despite that, my father always said that he never worked a day in his life as an officer because he loved his job so much. It was a way of life for him and he took pride in his work.

During his tenure, he saved countless lives, including the life of one of his fellow officers who was unconscious in his car from carbon monoxide poisoning during a shift. I have the upmost respect for my father and for police officers in general because they put their lives on the line everyday to keep all of us safe.

Having said that, I vehemently oppose the "Police Accountability Act". This bill is anti-police, pro-criminal and will normalize and encourage the murder of officers and civilians alike. Changing the standards of what is considered to be deadly force will cause the deaths of our officers and those they have sworn to serve and protect. Officers have to make split second decisions in order to save their life and the lives of others and taking away their ability to neutralize the aggressor will be deadly.

Additionally taking away qualified immunity is a dangerous thing. Once we take that away officers will be second guessing their actions when put in danger instead of doing what is needed to control a situation. They will think twice before going on a call, which is harmful to everyone in every community. We will also see a mass exodus of officers due to retirement and resignation. We will also see a decrease in applicants applying to the police academy. Not to mention which, it can't even be determined if taking away qualified immunity is constitutional. Isn't that something that should have been thought of before the bill was presented to the committee? Or does it not matter as long as the Judiciary Committee gets the result they are looking for?

Connecticut's violence will increase into what New York City looks like under this bill. The city's shootings have increased 130% over last year since they have reduced the police presence. The black community is actually begging the NYPD to reinstate their anti-crime unit. What is not understood is that taking police away from lower income areas is hurting the people that you say will be helped by this bill. It is short sighted and irresponsible to pass this legislation.

I watched seven of the twelve hours of testimony that was televised to the public last Friday. I heard many people say that they wanted SROs to be taken out of all schools as they intimidate and scare children of color. I listened to someone that stated in urban schools children of color are harmed more by having a police presence, than not having one. I asked a friend of mine, who is an assistant principal in a Hartford elementary school his thoughts on the matter. His response was "I actually have seen SROs have really nice relationships with the kids of color, better than some teachers. In HPS (Hartford Public Schools) we cut them back because of the budget and the schools went to shit". I would take his word over someone who conducted "a study" any day of the week as he sees it on a daily basis.

People are already fleeing Connecticut due to our high taxes and a lackluster job market. If this bill is passed, people will then be fleeing our state due to the violence and lawlessness. As I mentioned above, officers will retire, men and women will leave to start new careers, people will not want to become police officers and we will be left with criminals running the streets with no law and order. That may sound like a great plan for those of you who constructed this bill, but it does not to me. And I'll bet if you're honest with your self, you'll admit that you're getting a lot of feedback against passing this bill.

Lastly, I believe that the General Assembly is trying to sneak this legislation in during a special session in the hope that people will not have the time to mobilize and fight against it. Since when is

testimony capped so only the people who fit into twelve hours get to testify? Isn't it everyone's right to testify in front of the committee if they choose to? As I watched the testimony it seemed to me that the people testifying were selected based on whether or not they agreed with the legislation. It seemed weighted with people who agreed with the bill and those who didn't got the brush off. Additionally, people were given less than a day to sign up to testify. All these things add up to the Democrats trying to slip one by the people, not unlike what was tried and failed with tolls.

I sincerely hope that my testimony is taken into consideration. Everyone's voice should be heard and given the same amount of weight, even if they do not agree with what is being proposed. I hope the legislators see what a BIG mistake this bill would be and DO NOT VOTE for it on Thursday.

Sincerely,  
Nicole Palmieri  
Plainville, CT