



## **Judiciary Committee**

Public Testimony of the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF)

*LCO No. 3471: An Act Concerning Police Accountability*

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The Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) is a statewide nonprofit that advocates for and empowers women and girls in Connecticut, especially those who are underserved or marginalized. For nearly forty-seven years, CWEALF has been a leading advocate for policy solutions to ensure gender equity and access to justice.

Through CWEALF's Legal Education Program, we provide information, education, referrals, and bilingual advocacy to the Connecticut community to ensure that all individuals in our state have access to legal justice. The majority of CWEALF's clients are low-income women of color with at least one dependent.

CWEALF supports LCO No. 3471: An Act Concerning Police Accountability and encourages the Committee and Connecticut leaders to continue to swiftly pass legislation that combats systemic and institutional racism in all of its forms. While LCO No. 3471 is a necessary step forward, we also support the proposed amendments of community partners and advocates who lead the work of ending police violence and racism in our state.

Police brutality against the Black community is a feminist issue: while Black women are at higher risk of violence by police officers, their experiences are too often erased from the public narrative. Black women and girls continue to mourn husbands, fathers, sons and brothers who fall victim to police brutality as well.

According to data produced by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, women accounted for 27 percent of all arrests in 2017; a significant increase over the past few decades.<sup>1</sup>

Based on a study conducted by the Police-Public Contact Survey (PPCS), the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) reported that "Black women were about 17 percent more likely to be in a police-initiated traffic stop than white women, and 34 percent more likely to be stopped than Latina women. Among men, Black drivers were about 12 percent more likely than white drivers - and 17 percent more likely than Latino drivers - to be stopped."<sup>2</sup>

These statistics are just a few examples of reported figures that show the disproportionate effects of law enforcement on the Black community throughout the United States, specifically Black women.

Although LCO No. 3471 is a critical first step towards addressing police accountability, it is not enough. We urge this Committee, along with the rest of Connecticut's General Assembly to continue to revisit this issue, in addition to other issues critical to racial and gender equity - including access to affordable housing, health care, education and many others - over the coming sessions to continue Connecticut's journey to become a more equitable and safe state for all its residents.

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<sup>1</sup> [Prison Policy Initiative, "Policing Women: race and gender disparities in police stops, searches and use of force", May 14, 2019. Prison Policy Initiative.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Prison Policy Initiative, "Policing Women: race and gender disparities in police stops, searches and use of force", May 14, 2019. Prison Policy Initiative.](#)