

To Judiciary Committee on LCO #3471,

After reading many other public comments, I felt compelled to submit my own testimony in support of this bill being passed. It was frightening to see how many police officers are against a bill that holds them accountable, and even threatening that officers will resign because of this bill.

I am in support of this bill and agree with many sections. I support limiting and abolishing qualified immunity and civilian review boards, two main issues police officer testimonies were against. The police do not deserve to be above the law when they break it and should be investigated without a conflict of interest, which there clearly is if police officers investigate other officers. Many claim that civilians will not be trained enough to make decisions on police policy, but I argue that many officers aren't trained thoroughly and that the average hair dresser goes through more training than a police officer, plus that CT officers do not currently require a GED. Civilians appointed will be educated on police practices and will likely include members from activist groups that are trained on these topics.

I strongly agree with limits on vehicle searches without probable cause and limiting the use of deadly force. It is also frightening how many police officers have defended being able to use deadly force for those rare situations, and if that isn't telling that police need accountability I don't know what is. If officers feel that strongly about being able to murder someone, rather than another method for self-defense, they should be investigated with a mental health professional, another aspect of this bill I agree with.

I also agree that police are a waste of money at construction sites, I've never understood the point of that when there could be a separate profession for traffic control other than police. More could be added onto this bill, such as defunding the police rather than increasing their funding for such reforms. Although, the step to take away military gear is going in the right direction. The role of the inspector general could also act as a prosecutor and have the ability to strip an officers certification if the police force won't.

I am in support of this bill, and it seems as though many other citizens are as well in contrast to the 0 police I've seen in support of the bill. I feel as though the citizens should have a say in the power of the police, and right now it looks like CT police officers want to protect their ability to commit crimes without facing accountability. They often reference that George Floyd's officers were fired and stripped of their badge, but many officers in CT weren't even fired, reprimanded or stripped of their badge for murdering young black and brown boys in this state. I don't think a human is mentally well enough to continue protecting citizens are killing someone, and there should be no opportunity to come back from that yet they do again and again in Connecticut- Zoe Dowdell, Jayson Negron, Mubarak Soulemane are a few victims of police violence that come to mind. Connecticut needs to send a strong message to police officers that there is no tolerance for violence towards our citizens and that no matter how good of an institution they claim to be, we must look around and make changes to the flaws in the system that are perpetuating the disproportionate murder of black people by police.

Thank you for your time,

Nikki Ponticelli