

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee, Senate and House Leadership,

My name is Patrick Johnson and I live and vote in Meriden. Today I am writing to you, to ask that you pass LCO #3471 An Act Concerning Police Accountability (AACPA) with amendments. This proposed bill includes critical reforms, especially section 41 (elimination of qualified immunity), section 40 (Demilitarization), section 30 (Duty to Intervene), and section 17 (Empowering Civilian Review Boards with Subpoena Power). This bill is a powerful first step to re-imagining policing and prioritizing how we invest in our communities to maximize public health and safety. This moment calls for a transformation of Law Enforcement, for too long we have built the police up to be warriors and defenders, when what we need them to be are guardians and protectors.

The road will not be easy, I understand that, and I know for some the political vote will be incredibly hard to make. I ask you to make the vote anyway, prioritize people's health, the health of the communities.

In addition I ask that you include these measures to strengthen the bill further:

- Stronger Use of Force Standard: The bill should require that any use of deadly force is “necessary,” rather than the current standard of “objectively reasonable.” The use of force standard should include an officer’s entire engagement with a person rather than just the moment when severe or deadly force was used.
- Inspector General Hiring & Firing: The proposed bill includes the creation of an Inspector General to investigate incidents of police use of force, but leaves the hiring & firing of that position to the Chief State's Attorney at will; this is a conflict of interest. The Inspector General should be appointed by the Criminal Justice Commission directly.
- Public Right to Record Police: Ban police officers from taking cell phones or other recording devices without a person's consent or warrant. Give civilians the right to sue police departments if they take or destroy these devices without cause, as is exemplified in Colorado Law.
- Police Failure to Record: Even with police body & dash cameras adopted by police departments, too often use of force incidents do not get recorded. The bill should establish a rebuttable presumption that, if there is no police video recording of an incident, the officer is presumed to have used excessive force.

We are in a moment that can transform the trajectory of Connecticut. We cannot let the moment pass us by. This bill, including the additional items I presented, would create a safer Connecticut. Please pass it.

With gratitude and respect,
Patrick Johnson
Meriden, CT

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Patrick Johnson

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“Knowledge will forever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own Governors must arm themselves with the power knowledge gives”- James Madison