

Judiciary Committee
State House
Hartford, CT

Dear Committee Members,

First of all, I know that you have already met and that I am late in addressing this testimony, but I still want to let you know what I believe.

As an educator who has worked in Bridgeport and Norwalk I am writing to urge you to pass LCO #3471 An Act Concerning Police Accountability (AACPA) with amendments. I have heard too many accounts of lack of respect and intimidation by police officers, especially in dealings with minorities. While I know that this is not typical of all personnel and that the cities' police chiefs have spoken out in favor of better policing, the reality is that it is still happening and people's view of the police are adversely affected -- lack of trust.

Unless police are held accountable for their actions, excessive-force will continue. Connecticut needs to create a database of excessive-force episodes, ban police choke holds, and mandate increased police training, especially de-escalation training. Violence and brutality at the hands of law enforcement is an unacceptable violation of the public's trust. It is the obligation of law enforcement — whose professional duty it is to “protect and serve” the community — to de-escalate tension and to hold one another accountable. The overwhelming majority of police officers faithfully and bravely discharge their responsibilities, and no one resents a bad police officer more than a good police officer. Unfortunately, there are a handful of officers who abuse their positions.

I urge you to make LCO #3471 more effective. It also should require that any use of deadly force is “necessary,” rather than the current standard of “objectively reasonable.” The Inspector General, who will investigate incidents of police use of force, should be appointed by the Criminal Justice Commission directly. The bill should ban police officers from taking cell phones or other recording devices without a person's consent or warrant. Even with police body and dash cameras, too often use of force incidents do not get recorded. The bill should establish that, if there is no police video recording of an incident, the officer is presumed to have used excessive force.

Again, as a Connecticut resident, I strongly urge you to support and pass a strong Police Accountability bill during the Connecticut Special Session. You have an opportunity that will make Connecticut safer for all of our residents. Thank you,

Sister Peg Regan, SSND

345 Belden Hill Rd.
Wilton, CT 06897