

Peter J Salvatore-Town of Wethersfield

Hello Gentlemen and Ladies of the Legislature,

I would first like to thank you for your time and service to our state. I am writing because of the fears I have on the upcoming proposed Bill #3471, "Police Accountability". Unfortunately I am writing on a day where a mother and child were injured in a drive by shooting in Glastonbury and a week which has seen some of the worst gun violence in New Haven.

First and foremost I believe this bill to be a knee jerk reaction to events across the country. There needs to be more time committed to such a large bill to include a better chance at public testimony, not just a notice 48 hours prior.

Many of this issues, while highlighted in the 24 hour a day news cycle may feel like events that occur often but I assure you they do not. Connecticut State Police recently released their Use of Force statistics for 2019 and found that less than 1% of police interactions resulted in a use of force. Less than 1% of the time! Many situations in law enforcement, while necessary, do not always look pretty on camera. Many of the events I am sure you have seen and heard on the news represent that 1%. Fortunately officers do not wish to use force on anyone. Unfortunately members of the public force us to on a regular basis.

My biggest fear is blatant disregard for the Supreme Court of the United States by members of the Connecticut Legislature, many of whom are attorneys and should understand at a higher level rule of law. Ignoring Supreme Court Decisions such as *Graham v. Connor* in Use of Force incidents and further restricting officers in Connecticut will inevitably lead to the deaths of police officers and innocent civilians. Police Officers will hesitate in their responses. This will further be exacerbated with the limitation of Qualified Immunity. Limited Qualified Immunity will open individual Police Officers to frivolous law suits by criminals, some represented by the membership of this same Legislature I am writing to. Officers will not be able to afford to continue in this career if they are constantly sued.

Fewer people will want to be Police Officers following the probable adoption of this bill. Many current Police Officers will no longer remain on the job. New York City has recently enacted many similar changes and currently have a record number of Officers applying for retirement.

All too often we are reminded not to consider the actions of one person as a representation of a group. This is exactly what the membership bringing this bill forward has done. Police Officers routinely have their name dragged through the mud but when it comes to talking about the criminals they arrest we cannot talk about their past. We have to remember that each incident, each event we see on the news, is distinctly different and cannot be compared to previous events we have seen. If the membership saw the video police departments can't and don't release of how horrible citizens are we would not be having a discussion on this.

I ask that the membership listen to all the facts, listen to the experts, and to not allow fear to affect their decision. The consequences of this proposal have far greater repercussions than are realized. I ask that the membership consider the existing laws we are governed by in the Connecticut General Statutes and ask how they are applied. A recent news story showed that the Judicial Branch nollies

approximately 50% of criminal cases. Violent crime may have been down in Connecticut, but we have seen a horrible increase in domestic violence, stolen vehicles, and now gun related crime. We have also born the brunt of the opioid epidemic. Trust the Police Officers and Troopers in Connecticut to do the right thing and properly have their back when they do.

I also ask for the Legislators that intend to vote in favor of this bill to spend some real time with their local Police Officers, ride with them, step into our shoes and see what we see, and get to know us. I hope that you are shown an experience that can convince you to change your mind.

Respectfully,

Pete Salvatore
Police Officer, Veteran, Resident