

Hello,

I am a lifelong resident of Avon, CT and I am moving to California this summer for a PhD in Environmental Economics at the Bren School at UC Santa Barbara. This is my first time providing testimony, which is my first issue to bring up--for all of social media's faults, there must be a better way to improve public access to involvement in political matters. Corporations do it all the time, putting in inordinate amounts of time and money to get customer feedback in order to capitalize on shifts in preferences.

I've been listening to the livestream of the testimony hearing. I have some thoughts on the bill, but even more so on the manner in which the community is involved in developing the bill.

**Firstly**, I appreciate the fact that this hearing is online so that more people have an opportunity to participate, and I hope that such a process continues with a combination of in-person hearings in the future (along with better advertising and education on the political process).

**Secondly**, I missed the beginning of this hearing...but just like I take issue with the format of presidential debates and the current climate of a missing objective truth, I would hope that future hearings could begin with a panel of experts laying out the facts of the relevant issues to the bill in question. In this case, some questions to attempt to answer with facts could be:

"What is systemic racism and does it exist?"

"Is there evidence for systemic racism within all police departments or is it really just a few bad apples?"

"What is qualified immunity and how has it impacted police accountability and is it necessary for police officers to do their job?"

"How many police departments have policies and measures to deal with police complaints and how effective are these measures at eliminating perpetually bad officers from the system?"

"How do we know what the culture is like of police departments? Are there studies?"

And many more, but even attempting to answer a FEW of these questions with facts would give credibility to the decisions of the legislators that have to work with those facts.

I would extend this wish for a panel of experts to the bill itself, but I'm not sure how easy it is to quickly overview a complicated bill at the beginning of a hearing.

**Regarding the content of the bill**, I am happy that the legislature has been working hard to draft a bill and I am pleased with much of what it contains, but I am disappointed with the stark lack of any measures to shift a portion of funding from police departments to other organizations that can better accomplish the myriad of tasks that police officers are responsible for, tasks that go beyond dealing with dangerous or common crime.

Social workers and corresponding organizations can provide expert services to prevent crime, by addressing poverty, addiction, and domestic abuse. I'm clearly not an expert on this BUT my train of logic goes as follows: BIPOC have been protesting for centuries on systemic racism, much of which I never learned about because the topic was brief in high school and treated as though much of racism had been solved. Recently I read *The Color of Law* by Richard Rothstein and I learned that the same myth of racism being individual (de facto) even invades our Supreme Court system as recently as 2007. **If we have been trying as a nation to provide police reform for over a century and the result is a**

**continuation of unjust murdering of BIPOC people by the police and a continuation of protests, is this method working to improve our society fast enough?** Or are the centuries of protests evidence enough to try something new, even if it may disadvantage certain groups of people (e.g. police departments) in the short run? It'd be hard to do a cost-benefit analysis of taking a risk on a completely new way of policing that includes the community in an even more in-depth way than it does now, but now that I am educated on just how vast the quantity of US-government sponsored economic disadvantage to BIPOC has been, it seems likely that in conjunction with the emotional and psychological cost, the temporary transitional safety risk and job losses from refunding and refocusing our police departments, is worth it in the long run. And I'm a proponent of drastic climate change action, so I understand the difficulty of getting people to invest money today to prevent an uncertain future. Hence the extra benefit of providing facts of our history at the beginning of a hearing.

There's a concept in economics called creative destruction, which describes how the market can eliminate entire industries and people's lives in the name of innovation, and indeed in the long run such cases (like Detroit auto workers' jobs moving overseas where labor is cheaper) can be argued as having a net benefit on society as a whole. However, there is evidence that individuals hurt by such creative destruction are permanently damaged by the economic setback. When I learned about this in a college economics class, it was really difficult to reconcile, and still is. Ultimately, the sacrifice of cost-efficiency and rapid innovation and development is today's reality of inequality (though the topic of unregulated capitalism and different economic systems is a separate topic), more inequality now than in much of the U.S.'s history. Ultimately, I don't have the answer to such an ethical question, but can't we at least have the discussion that, maybe, the increased job insecurity to police officers and other temporary adverse effects are worth trying out a new solution to a problem that has lasted for over a century?

The hearing today is full of people providing personal testimonies on the complications of the bill, and all of that is important--both the importance of personal stories and the importance of the impact of legislative wording. But if you don't have an understanding of the facts of the issue, those personal stories lose their power. Debates become an argument for truth. Police chiefs and citizens should NOT be responsible with providing legislators the facts of what happens in police departments (which is not to claim that legislators do not seek expert advice). But in a world where truth is constantly twisted, there is a significant benefit to our state citizens in having our legislators explicitly demonstrate how important it is to get the facts right, and that relying on statistical analysis and investigation is the proper manner of action whenever possible.

Clearly people have a lot of thoughts on this bill and would prefer it take longer to be discussed before it happens, but part of thinks there is a great opportunity to learn from experience instead of pushing off legislation longer. The other part of me notes that, even though such opportunities to learn from experience were invaluable in learning how to improve climate change taxes and caps, the failure of such necessary first attempts (such as in the EU) have marred the face of climate taxes and carbon cap and trade.

So as long as it's not going to take another year until legislation is passed (and enforced) AND the further review and community involvement in the process is shifted so that hearings are based on facts as much as possible, I support taking a bit more time to review it, and I also support passing it as is and learning from the experience.

As a young person who hopes her future will one day entail a society that can agree on basic truths and can converse as though they are living on the same earth, I implore you to ensure your treatment of

policy and community involvement reflects such a commitment to fact and to truth.

Sincerely,

Risa Lewis