

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

There are some promising aspects of this bill, but there is one exceptionally disastrous one that I'd like to discuss. I'm referring to § 29, which includes the limitation of chokeholds to only be sanctioned for a response to deadly physical force. Specifically, lines 1257-1264 on page 43 of the working bill, which read:

*(d) A peace officer, special policeman appointed under section 29-18b or authorized official of the Department of Correction or the Board of Pardons and Paroles is justified in using a chokehold or other method of restraint applied to the neck area or that otherwise impedes the ability to breathe or restricts blood circulation to the brain of another person for the purposes specified in subsection (b) of this section only when he or she reasonably believes such use to be necessary to defend himself or herself from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force.*

I'm a forty-five-year-old corporate cube-dweller who trains in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. In addition to sports jiu-jitsu, I train in combatives, which is the application of martial arts in real-life circumstances. I train weekly in combatives taught by and alongside members of law enforcement using real-life techniques in the hopes that I will never need to use them. I am proud to train alongside men and women who have devoted their careers to the public's safety and well-being.

The chokehold can be, and usually is, a safe control technique. I can't tell you how many times I have tapped on the mats when being caught in one. The issue is not the hold, it's the duration that the hold is being applied. I can tap, and the hold stops. George Floyd didn't have that option and was put in an especially dangerous hold that restricted respiration long after he was subdued by multiple officers and no longer posed a threat of any kind.

In the split seconds of an altercation, a quick chokehold before moving to a restraining position that does not require one is an important means of protecting one's own safety and the safety of others in unarmed combat. **Please, do not strip Connecticut's police officers of this option.** A police officer's interaction with a civilian can escalate rapidly, from a moment of no indication from the civilian that there will be a conflict to a full physical assault. A police officer cannot always determine instantaneously that an assault started by a civilian is with or imminently precedes the use of deadly physical force. Police officers must be granted the ability to assume that deadly physical force is forthcoming if a civilian initiates unarmed altercation. The chokehold is a rapid way of re-establishing safety and can be further transitioned to means that provide no risk of asphyxiation.

I would suggest altering this paragraph to allow the application of a chokehold in situations that are not a response to deadly physical force for a period of **no more than five seconds**. This would allow the officer to transition to a non-asphyxiating means of control while not having to worry about being "paralyzed by analysis" in that crucial first second of a physical altercation where it is indeterminate if the civilian is using or has the potential to use deadly physical force.

An alteration of the aforementioned lines that would achieve this would be, (emphasis added):

*(d) A peace officer, special policeman appointed under section 29-18b or authorized official of the Department of Correction or the Board of Pardons and Paroles is justified in using a chokehold or other method of restraint applied to the neck area or that otherwise impedes the*

*ability to breathe or restricts blood circulation to the brain of another person for the purposes specified in subsection (b) of this section only when he or she reasonably believes such use to be necessary to defend himself or herself from the use or imminent use of deadly physical force, **or if the chokehold or other method is applied for no longer than five seconds.***

Thank you very much for your consideration of this matter and for your service to the state of Connecticut.

Yours truly,

Robert Mayette

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