

Saomai Phuong Nguyen
West Hartford, CT

Dear Connecticut Legislators,

My name is Saomai and I am a Connecticut resident. I am writing to share my support for "An Act Concerning Police Accountability." Specifically, I am writing to support the **demilitarization of Connecticut police departments**. This includes: 1) outlawing police searches without probable cause, even if the person consents to the search; 2) banning stop-and-frisk in Connecticut; and 3) the disposal of all military equipment currently held by police departments. Additionally, **there must be more accountability for Connecticut police departments**. This comes in the form of 1) granting power that allows municipalities to establish Civilian Review Boards with Subpoena powers; 2) mandating a duty to intervene if a police officer witnesses another officer using excessive or illegal use-of-force; and 3) ending qualified immunity for officers who violate people's civil rights. Police departments have been institutions of violence and subjugation that have perpetuated and sustained the oppression of Black and Brown folks since their inception in the United States. We must recognize this fact and move forward with actions that will actually serve and protect our communities.

I am writing to support the bill, but I believe that means I must also be critical of the bill and ask that amendments be made to further strengthen this bill. I do not agree with increasing funding for police departments, whether municipal or state. I support the immediate defunding and divestment from police departments and reallocation of these resources for social services. However, the reallocation of these resources for social services should also not look like adding social workers to police departments. They should be used for certain emergency and mental health calls, but social workers should not work under police departments. Finally, you must address the overrepresentation of police officers and politicians on the Police Officer Standards and Training Council. In conjunction with granting power to establish Civilian Review Boards, this council must be dominated by civilians. Safety should be for and by the community, not police officers and politicians who are/can be corrupted by power and ulterior motives.

Thank you for your time,
Saomai Phuong Nguyen