

To Whom This May Concern:

It is disheartening to hear modern days society view on law enforcement. Law enforcement should be viewed as a courageous oath these men and women are taking to serve our communities, as they are putting their lives on the line daily to keep our streets safe. Civilians view police officers as a waste of space until they must confide in law enforcement because they are scared for their safety. Creating a bill such as the police accountability is not improving civilians' views on law enforcement, it is only making that segregation stronger.

Police are ordinary people, working an eight-hour shift, trying to make ends meet just like everyone else in this world. Taking away the option to work road jobs, is equivalent to cutting a person's salary in half. Many police officers rely on the extra income opportunity to help support their families and there is no justifiable reason to take away their right to road job overtime. Companies who are fixing power lines or paving roads need to focus on the job they were assigned to do, they shouldn't have to worry about being hit by a car because a lane of traffic was incorrectly shut down. A police presence enforces speed control and a set of eyes incase anything happens.

If you are cutting down police officers' salaries, then you cannot expect them to provide their own liability insurance because they will not be able to afford it. Working in the manufacturing industry, I expect my employers to provide my liability insurance in case something happens to me when visiting the factory. That is an employer's duty, if you are putting an employee in harm's way then it is the company's responsibility to be liable for the employee's well-being and it should be no different for law enforcement. I also worked for a town for a few years, so I understand the amount of times towns people have held the town liable for tripping on an uneven sidewalk. If towns people are covered when making complaints, then police officers must also be covered, you cannot segregate.

Under the fourth amendment, an officer does not need consent to search a motor vehicle because there are seven exceptions to the amendment. A police officer has an opportunity to take drugs, weapons and criminals off the street when pulling over a motor vehicle. This gives an officer an opportunity to save lives by taking these contrabands off the streets. By taking away these seven exceptions, we are at risk for a higher crime rate and putting our communities at a much greater risk.

In this bill proposal, it is discussed that civilian review boards would have subpoena power. Providing this power will increase costs because police officers would be paid for the time they are spending in review boards and decrease the manpower a town has because your taking away police officers who are supposed to be patrolling the streets. Not to mention, officers would be subpoenaed daily. Meaning departments would have to hire more police officers to fill these gaps. Unfortunately, so many departments are being defunded right now and these actions would require departments to spend millions over their budget for them to be fully staffed. When a civilian reaches out to 9-1-1, they are expecting an officer to arrive on the scene immediately, there should never be a wait time for an emergency.

Another item on this bill proposal is changing the Graham shooting standard. We do not have a black and white world, meaning every situation a police officer is in will not be uniformed and cannot be treated that way. Every situation a police officer is in must involve quick response and actions because

their life and their colleague's life are on the line. It is easy for an outside opinion to critique a situation when reviewing body cam footage however, they do not know what the officer's justifiable actions were for making that split-second decision. It may not always be obvious because nothing is ever cut and dry however, communication needs to be made with that officer before suspending them. Yes, we know what happened to George Floyd was inhumane however, there are always going to be crooked cops just like there will always be crooked doctors and crooked accountants. We cannot judge an entire occupation based off a few bad eggs. Anyone with a badge is still a human being and human beings can also make mistakes. We cannot discriminate based on this misrepresentation of police. We want our police officers to be good at their jobs, we cannot expect that out of them when they are not being supported. Our police need our support more than ever right now, we do not need to turn our country racist against these men and women in blue. Officer's take bullets for strangers, so we need to show the same respect by supporting them with our trust.

Lastly, I would like to discuss waiving qualified immunity for civil rights violations. Police officers cannot effectively do their jobs without it. When an officer is acting within the scope of his duties, he should feel protected by his employers and not have to worry about being sued with every move he/she makes. If you want to waive qualified immunity for civil right violations, then you will be terminating law enforcement within the state of Connecticut. Officers would be in court daily and would not have the funds to constantly hire a lawyer for their time for these small complaints that are discriminatory against law enforcement. Police officers do not choose the calls they go to on their shift and they respond as tactically and logically as they can, that is why they train for at least nine months before being on their own.

We need to put trust into our officers, that is the only way they can efficiently do their job. We need to educate the communities on law enforcement. Talking to friends and family, they do not realize the training officers go through. Police officers do not sit in a class all day, they learn defense tactics, how to deal with the public and how to safely drive to calls. These tactics need to be addressed to the public, so people are educated and can state an opinion off reality instead of what they see on television. The black lives matter supporters are outsiders and it shows because they discuss defunding departments and implementing more training however, training is the first thing that is going to be cut if a department is defunded. If these protestors want more training, then these departments are going to have to spend a lot more money. Training officers is extremely expensive and so many departments are underfunded as it is. These individuals show no empathy for hard workers who are putting their life on the line daily and I can guarantee you the protestors could not and would not if given the opportunity. It is a shame to see these protestors acting out in such violent ways, by trashing our country and no one is doing anything about it. We have law enforcement for a reason, they are here to serve and protect our communities, they are not here to diagnose criminals or be gentle with people who are acting in a criminal state. We have laws set in place and police officers are here to enforce those laws. If civilians do not want to follow those laws, then they have every right to be searched and assessed.

When my husband started the police academy, the first thing that was engrained into his head was to keep his shoes shiny because the first thing a criminal takes note of is an officer's shiny shoes. If they are not shined, a criminal sees you as the weakest link, the easiest target to blind side. Our police officers need to hold themselves high because if they do not, criminals will try to take advantage of them and that is not what we expect out of officers who are keeping our communities safe. We want them to come home in one piece just like everyone else who leaves for work every day. Law

enforcement is a tough job to begin with, it does not take the average person to go through the training, deal with the calls and have to handle everything in a calm demeanor. You are making it harder for police to do their jobs, which will eventually abolish the profession because people are not going to want to be a part of a career that everyone dishonors, especially when you're putting yourself on the line every day for these non-supporters. I would not feel safe living in a town or state that did not have police or police support. Officers like my husband, do not deserve this.

My husband is one of the most caring and selfless people I know, and it brings tears to my eyes knowing he has to go into work every day and deal with constant name calling and violent behavior just because he wears a uniform. It is hard enough to sleep at night because of the unknown, but these protestors have created a much larger target on these officers back. I am sure a majority of cop wives are going through the same pain and can express the same concerns. Knowing our leaders are turning a blind eye to law enforcement makes us disappointed. You have a chance to make a difference, instead of passing this bill lets educate the public because passing this bill will only bring back segregation. Thank you for taking the time out of your day to hear my arguments towards this proposed bill. If you have any questions, I can be reached at (203)215-5142.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Savannah Yelenik".

Savannah Yelenik