

I write to you today in opposition to many components of the Act Concerning Police Accountability. I am presently a police sergeant, a UCONN School of Law graduate, and a member of the CT Bar. I will not waste your time on a point by point essay on each element I find troubling as I am confident you will hear many voices that will express each of those concerns with clarity. However, I do feel it is important that my voice is heard.

My main concerns are that the full impact of this bill has not been fully contemplated and that the bill will not address very real racial and social inequities, but instead use Connecticut police officers as a scapegoat to society's problems. Legislation of this magnitude requires time, research, discussion, and debate. However, it was only one month ago when Connecticut's Police Accountability and Transparency Task Force was still in its preliminary stages and was urged by Governor Lamont, Attorney General Tong, and the Judiciary Committee to move quickly so they could consider reforms for special legislation. The task force ultimately recommended fundamental changes to law enforcement operations in Connecticut but without the time to fully investigate and consider the impact of such changes. Only one month later, major police reform has been written in proposed legislation. Thus, based on police misconduct that occurred half a country away, Connecticut's politicians responded by rushing along our own political process. Of equal concern, is the idea that the task force claims to have used as its foundation, President Obama's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Task Force and Implementation Guide. If the task force had read and fully understood this document they would have realized that President Obama's Task Force concluded two overarching recommendations. First, "The President should support and provide funding for the creation of a National Crime and Justice Task Force to review and evaluate all components of the criminal justice system for the purpose of making recommendations to the country on comprehensive criminal justice reform." Second, "The President should promote programs that take a comprehensive and inclusive look at community-based initiatives that address the core issues of poverty, education, health, and safety." What do these two overarching recommendations have in common? Neither directly addresses policing. Let that settle in: President Obama's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing Task Force, the foundation for Connecticut's own police reform task force, did not include policing reform in its overarching recommendations. Connecticut's Police Accountability and Transparency Task Force found a good resource for reform, but used that document to draw the wrong conclusions.

Lasting and meaningful change is needed. Such change will not be achieved by knee-jerk reactions to catchy sound bites such as "defund the police," "eliminate qualified immunity," "end broken windows policing." Legislating continued policing reform is the easy answer, but it's the wrong answer. It is necessary for our state's leaders to work on some changes that will actually make a difference. I will close with another excerpt from President Obama's Task Force.

"Decades of research and practice tell us that the public cares as much about how police interact with them as they care about the outcomes that legal actions produce. People are more likely to obey the law when they believe those who are enforcing it have the right—the legitimate authority—to tell them what to do. Building trust and legitimacy, therefore, is not just a policing issue. It involves all components of the criminal justice system and is inextricably bound to bedrock issues affecting the community such as poverty, education, and public health."

Thank you for your time.

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