

Some of these provisions are disasters and run counter to Graham vs Connor and current case law like Plakas vs Drinski. The idea that the use of deadly force will be judged, AFTER the fact, on whether or not the person had a weapon and not if it was reasonable to believe he had one would mean the use of force could be found to be unreasonable based solely on the fact that the gun pointed at an officer was in fact a BB gun even if he did not and could not know that.

The idea of stripping immunity is another lesson in law makers and uninformed or deliberately obtuse interest groups attempting to further an ideology and not actually working to make policing more effective and safer for both officers and the community. Currently, the Supreme Court has set a high bar for officers to be found liable, but that does not mean victims of poor policing go without compensation. In fact, as everyone should know, it means that officers can't be personally bankrupted by lawsuits that stem from decision made, and I quote, in stressful and rapidly evolving situations. Officers are currently asked to make a decisions in the field, without reference or time to study the law on whether or not an action is permissible in situations in which a lawyer and a judge is hard pressed to decide with months to study and deliberate. If an action is wrong, an officer may not be individually liable but the town and department can be, and if it is egregious enough the officer may be fried by the department.

Finally I find it personally offensive that no one has enough moral courage to stand up and remind the public that a lawful order from a Police Officer is to be followed, and the time and place to fight that is in courts and not in the streets. Our leaders, professionally, and elected, are kowtowing to the mob and giving support to the idea that you can fight back. These actions put Officers in danger as well as members of the public. Further, the courts do not prosecute charges of interfering when a suspect fails to follow orders, or assault on a Police Officer when we are assaulted. These make these charges trivial, which is why we don't use them often, and emboldens the public to fight the lawful use of authority.

These changes to laws would lead to Police Officers being less engaged with their communities rather than more engaged. It would lead to more violence and not less. If we in Connecticut want to see the rapid rise in crime and violence we can certainly mirror the stupid mistakes lawmakers have already made in places like New York and elsewhere. But we have an opportunity to do better, to inform the public on police procedure and explain why the case law is such. We can be brave in the face of the agitators and and extremists who wish to push an agenda.

There are roughly 375,000,000 million police/citizen Interactions per year. The number of tragic interactions is amazingly low, and has led to the lowest crime rates ever in the modern era. The truth is that George Floyd is not a symptom of a broken system, it's a tragedy that is so rare it accounts for .00000027 percent of what Police accomplish in a year. That truth may be painful but it is the truth. And sometimes you have to have the courage to speak truth to power.

Sergeant William May

Bethel Police Department