

**Testimony of Anna Tornello**  
**HB 3471, An Act Concerning Police Accountability**

My name is Sgt. Anna Tornello and I am president of the Wilton Police Union. I would like to comment on HB 3471 An Act Concerning Police Accountability. By now you might have heard enough appeals to reason, given the seriousness of the consequences that might result from the provisions that are included in your proposed legislative bill.

But I would like to offer a different perspective on the issue, the perspective of the officers who wear the uniform and their badge, every day, loyal to the oath they took when they signed up for this difficult and clearly thankless profession.

I grew up knowing to look for a man or woman in uniform to feel safe and protected. I came into this profession to bring safety and protection to all the people in my community, and never once have I heard of any of my fellow officers deny assistance to anybody in need because of skin color, gender, religion, or whatever else might be taken as an excuse for accusations of discriminatory practices.

You are acting upon a belief that Police are murderers. I won't go into the data and numbers that would easily disprove that. Instead, I would like to tell you that when we, the real Police, signed up for this job we accepted all the risks and the inconveniences that come with it. We miss our childrens' birthdays, and we seldom get to celebrate the holidays with our families and friends, and we realize that one night we might not make it back home.

We are the people that, during the pandemic, have been available to assist our citizens, even to cheer them up with colorful parades while they were locked up in their homes. We go to medical calls, we do CPR on patients who we know won't make it to not let their family members down, we train in Crisis Intervention to be able to talk with the mentally ill in distress, we train to be able to reassure autistic children, we spend nights out in the freezing cold looking for missing persons, we spend time playing with the child who does not know his little brother and playmate won't be back from the hospital...

But we also train to run full speed into a building, perhaps a school, to face an active shooter, knowing all too well that it will make us an easy target but hopeful that a little distraction might allow a few more seconds for the hostages to escape, even if those few seconds of hope might cost our own life. We won't turn our back and run away if the people in that building don't look like us. That is not what the Police do.

Come one day with us and walk in our shoes before you start thinking you know who we are and what we do. I knew this job had dangers, but I never expected the dangers to come from the people who represent the laws we are called to enforce. Defunding the Police does not only happen by removing funding; it happens when you remove their enthusiasm and kill their morale.

Confused young officers are making the conscious decision that it is better to be shot and dead than deal with the plethora of wrongful accusations and shame they will be put through, even through no fault of their own, so that at least their families will survive. And I am here

to tell you, dear members of this committee, that any injury to any of my brothers and sisters officers that will result from their inability to act will be your sole responsibility.

I would like to conclude with a quote by Emerson: “No change of circumstances can fix a defect of character.” No law will ever correct the deficiencies of evil hearts, especially when it cripples the potential of the good ones.