

Dear Legislator,

I am writing to you in opposition of the legislative bill LCO # 3471. I am asking you to think of the greater good and all of your constituents when voting. We were all horrified by the act taken by one office in the case of George Floyd. The public is outraged, rightly so. That includes our men and women in blue. Since May 25th law enforcement has been under attack. There are over 800,000 officers in this country. There are close to 7,000 in Connecticut alone. According to the Connecticut State Police (CSP) Statistics there were 468,469 interactions between the CSP, 94 cases of use of force, and 1 death resulting from it. That means that .02% of interactions in CT involved use of force. But since May 25th officers are being met with hate and aggression. They are being screamed at during standard traffic stops as they approach vehicles that occupants "can't breathe" and are enduring being called every profanity in the book. No one in our Connecticut Government is supporting them. They make up a significant population of CT and fall across every gender and race demographic.

If you pass this bill, eliminating qualified immunity you will hurt Connecticut and the good and innocent people who live here. Perhaps the intent behind the bill was meant to come from a good place, but what will actually happen will be totally detrimental to our way of life. Citizens will be bringing lawsuits like you have never seen before even though their constitutional rights were not violated. They will be looking for a payday, a way to get the police, anything but actual justice. In 2020 people are not taking any responsibility for their own actions. They break the law, and then they blame the police. If we allow the public to bring frivolous lawsuits against an individual officer personally, the officer will be forced to pay for the legal fees out of their own pocket, miss work days for court, and potentially lose their homes and assets. Families will be unduly burdened and potentially out on the street. If we allow this bill to pass, the good officers, the 99% of officers, will likely leave the state or the profession. They are willing to put their lives on the line everyday for a public that hates them. But by passing this you will ask that they put their families well-being on the line. That is unfair and most won't do it. So what happens to all your good and law abiding citizens relying on the police to keep us safe when they are all gone?

I personally work as a medical provider in a busy Emergency Department in Bridgeport. I witness horrific things everyday. I take care of victims of domestic abuse, child abuse, sexual assault, and violent crimes. I take care of the KIDS who are shooting each other daily. I listen to the blood curdling screams of the Moms and Dads when we tell them we did everything we could but their CHILD has died. In fact their child has been MURDERED. For every single one of these situations the police show up. They come to work everyday to protect other people's families. They step up when everyone else steps away. I could list all of the heroic actions I have witnessed the police perform but this email would go on forever. These violent crimes and awful things are not going to stop, but I can guarantee you they are going to get worse if this bill passes. You will see a record number of these heroic officers hand in their badges and walk away. Who do we call then?

I am scared for our future. It feels like the decisions being made at the government level are so out of touch with reality and the real world impact this will have. Please vote no for this bill. Please keep the qualified immunity to protect the citizens who live here. I do not want to think about how dangerous this world, this state will be when all the good officers have to leave to protect their families from the frivolous lawsuits and financial ruin.

I urge you to protect the good, law abiding citizens of Connecticut and vote NO! I want to raise my children in a safe environment and in the state I call home.

Thank you,

Shannon Gorton.