



39 Goodrich St., New Haven, CT
06517

Founded 1952

July 17,2020

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Rebimbas and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee:

I'm Stanley Heller, Administrator of Promoting Enduring Peace. We were founded in New Haven in 1952. We support the general thrust of LCO No. #3471, but believe it needs to be strengthened.

1. There should be a provision for the popular election of members of each locality's police commission. These commissions were supposed to be the ultimate civilian control of local police, but are generally dominated by retired police.
2. More of the ideas of Governor Lamont's Executive Order with new regulations for State Police should be included in the bill. Police should seek to deescalate and diffuse rather than to demand immediate obedience. They should explain why they are detaining people and should give clear warnings when they intend to use force. We've been closely examining the incident of 1/15/20 in West Haven where a State Trooper shot Mubarak Soulemane to death. He was in a car with the windows up and the car was boxed in by police cars. Yet within two minutes he was shot 7 times and he died.
3. We fully support section #41, the attempt to limit "qualified immunity". Right now it's almost impossible to prevail in a civil suit against police misconduct no matter how outrageous the police action.
4. We feel that the public would be better served if the average police officer did not routinely have a pistol. Pistols and rifles should be furnished only to members of specially trained squads to be used in dire situations. Connecticut should follow the British model in this regard. Gun incidents in Britain are far, far less than in the U.S.
5. As far as Connecticut is concerned the "drug war" should be ended. Its effect has been racist. Drugs are a public health problem and should be treated as such. America went through Prohibition with good intentions and ended up by enormously strengthening gangs and mobs. We should have learned from that debacle. Prisons should be emptied of those guilty of drug offenses and they should be given housing and jobs to prevent recidivism. LCO No. #3471 should in part reduce the mass incarceration of minorities.
6. A provision should be included to ban the use of police dogs for crowd control.
7. There should be substantial money provided for communities to create model programs that eliminate "policing" in favor of other institutions that protect the security of the public.