

Dear Connecticut Legislators,

My name is Tyasha Pace and I live in New London, CT. I am writing to express my support for LCO# 3471 "An Act Concerning Police Accountability." Specifically, I am writing to support the following and ask that amendments be made to further strengthen this bill:

- ☐ Granting power that allows municipalities to establish Civilian Review Boards with Subpoena powers. (Note: as written, the bill currently says CRB's 'may' have subpoena power, not 'must'. That language is key).
- ☐ Outlawing police searches without probable cause, even if the person consents to the search
- ☐ Outlawing police offers from asking for any documents (such as green cards, and other immigration documents) other than a driver's license during traffic stops (note: as written, the bill currently says police can ask for other forms of ID if someone does not provide a license. This is an unsafe measure for the undocumented community).
- ☐ Mandating a duty to intervene if a police officer witnesses another officer using excessive or illegal use-of-force
- ☐ Ending qualified immunity for officers who violate people's civil rights
- ☐ Banning stop-and-frisk in Connecticut
- ☐ Demilitarizing of Connecticut police departments, including the disposal of all military equipment currently held by police departments

Requiring that police officers to prominently display their badge

- ☐ Stronger Use of Force Standard. The bill should require that any use of deadly force is 'necessary' rather than the current standard of 'objectively reasonable.' This standard should also include an officers' entire engagement with a person(s) rather than just the moment when severe or deadly force was used. (Note: this specific provision is soul wrenching because police are NEVER justified in killing our people. The idea that police use force to make themselves more safe is not true. We have seen police use life-preserving skills when responding to white male mass shooters like Dylann Roof. In that case, police never found it "necessary" to "use force," even though Dylann Roof had murdered several people within a church. Police protected him without conditions. But when police interact with people of color, particularly Black and Brown youth like Jayson Negron, Mubarak Soulemane, Zoe Dowdell, Corbin Cooper, Jarelle Gibbs, Vincent Folkwes (Kuda), Malik Jones, Anthony Vega (Chulo), and so many others in this state who have been murdered at the hands of police, the "use of force" becomes "necessary." Police in this state do not prioritize preventing harm when they come into contact with people of color. We know this because we have seen police escalate violence and cause harm over and over again: in over 30 police killings within the last three years, in their interactions with protestors, and in everyday abuses against people of color. The conditions that determine when police will "use force" and when police practice "de-escalation" tactics are directly connected to a person's race, gender, housing status, mental health, and disabilities. Nonetheless, we must push legislators to use and define words like 'necessary force' and 'de-escalation').

I also want to highlight the components of the bill I disagree with, which include:

- Increasing funding for police departments, whether municipal or state. We support the immediate defunding and divestment from police departments and reallocation of these resources for social services
- Adding social workers to police departments. The current bill calls for a study be conducted by departments on this matter. Social workers should be used for certain emergency/mental health calls but they should not work under police departments.
- The overrepresentation of police officers and politicians on the Police Officer Standards and Training Council. They make up 12/20 of the Council's membership. This council should be dominated by civilians not politicians or police officers.

I write using this form letter to organize my thoughts and help present a clear message that is in unity with others who believe what I do. I don't take these matters lightly and understand the major implications of making significant changes to our state's policing policies. In that regard, I implore you to understand those implications as well. The people of our communities have had enough of the opaque practices of law enforcement, and the policies that protect them from being held accountable in the same ways of every other citizen. If you claim to support changes that provide community equity, now is the time to act. Refusal

to upset the status quo that upholds such wanton disregard for human life (especially black, brown, immigrant, and poor lives) is not only deplorable but reprehensible. The citizens of Connecticut are beginning to find their united voice to express not just concern for the lack of police accountability but for the bloated, over reaching arm of law enforcement in our lives. This voice is only going to keep growing stronger and louder as police officers continue to benefit from their harmful actions against Connecticut citizens, and as we continue to shine light on these actions. We believe there are better ways to serve our communities because we have seen, felt, and experienced enough to say that the way that has always been does not work, and never has. We implore you to trust us, the people who have already put our trust in you. We ask you to serve us as you have sworn to do, and put our interests first, as you claimed you would when we elected you. When you believe our stories, our truths regarding police oppression, and hear our cries for a better world, then we can begin to trust you in your decisions to help create said world.

Thank you for your time.

Best,

Tyasha Pace