

Written Testimony Regarding LCO No. 3471, An Act Concerning Police Accountability

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

My name is Victoria Elise Sogueco, and I am a resident of Milford, CT. I am testifying regarding LCO No. 3471, An Act Concerning Police Accountability. I support some sections of LCO No. 3471 that increase police accountability; it is essential that police officers are held accountable for racial profiling, brutalizing and murdering civilians. However, more effective measures need to be put in place to ensure police accountability and police divestment, especially for the Black and Latinx community in CT. It is important to not only hold the police accountable, but also to reinvest in our communities by redistributing police funding to education, physical and mental health care, affordable housing, social services and public goods. This bill is a great start, but I cannot fully support it without further amendments. This bill is simply not enough.

The language in Sections 1-4 & 15 suggest that the police has the authority to police themselves for the certification and decertification process. This is harmful and would facilitate corruption and a lack of accountability. The language in these section should be amended to create an independent investigation body, who do not have a conflict of interest, to be in charge of these matters.

Sections 33-35 proposes for a new inspector general position to investigate the use of force and DOC custodial deaths. An independent prosecutor is necessary for police accountability. In addition, there is substantial research and evidence demonstrating that implicit bias training does not reduce police brutality or effectively change police behavior. Mandatory implicit training would be a waste of resources, and therefore should not be included in this bill.

Section 18 suggests that police departments evaluate the effectiveness of social workers and whether or not police officers' work should be replaced by social workers. Since police departments have a conflict of interest, it is important to have an independent body, without a conflict of interest, in charge of evaluating this.

In general, body-worn cameras do not, and cannot reduce police violence and brutality or increase accountability *unless* they are accompanied by policies that prioritizes police accountability. In the absence of proper, adequate policies, police reforms do not result in safer communities, but rather increased, unnecessary surveillance.

Lastly, I would like to voice my support for Sections 8, 9, 17, 30, 40 & 41, which are great steps towards police accountability. Police violence specifically towards Black and Latinx people is a serious problem in Connecticut. Proper policies need to be put in place to stop the cycle of police brutality.