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Re: Concerns to Senate 2820 as Amended

July, 17, 2020

Dear Chair Aaron Michlewitz and Chair Claire Cronin, please accept the following testimony with regard to SB2820 - An Act to reform police standards and shift resources to build a more equitable, fair and just commonwealth that values Black lives and communities of color.

I would first like to advise you both that I am in full support and agreement with the letter submitted to you by Mass Chiefs President Jeff Farnsworth and Major City Police Chief President Brian Keyes.

I wanted to take a moment to specifically provide my view point as it relates to qualified immunity. The Mass Chiefs letter explains in more detail how it affects law enforcement but I want to provide my concerns as a police chief.

I believe that if passed numerous frivolous law suits will emerge. I also believe proactive policing will be greatly diminished as officers will be fearful to perform certain job related tasks.

The other major concern is related to attracting qualified police officers, as some agencies are having issues now with recruitment.

If the Senate version passes as written I also believe you will see a mass exodus within the law enforcement community. I am hearing from younger officers that are questioning their career field choice in law enforcement. Officers and supervisors who can or are about to reach superannuation who were planning on continuing with their career, are now contemplating retirement if this Bill is passed as proposed by the Senate.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter and want you to know we realize positive change needs to take place. I am offering to assist in any discussion to ensure we provide public safety services that are of the highest quality, while unbiased, for all that we are honored to serve.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey A. Lourie, Chief of Police

