

July 16, 2020

Chairman Michlewitz
Chairwoman Cronin
Member of the House Committee on Ways and Means
House Members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary
Boston, MA 02133

RE: S2820 - 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

House Members,

In the light of recent events, nobody will argue there is need for police reform. I do however take issue with removing Qualified Immunity (QI) for our officers. QI never protected Police Officers from suits over excessive use of force or malicious prosecution. It protected Officers from lawsuits; even if a ticket or case was thrown out, as long as it was in good faith an officer could not be held liable.

This bill as written, without QI opens the door for lawsuits when an Officer writes a ticket for speeding and it's thrown out of court for first offense, or an Officer makes an arrest for a crime and it's dismissed for the victim not showing up to court, which an officer has no control over.

Overnight the State Senate passed the police reform bill, so now it will hit the House, then Governor Baker's desk. Then it is law. "Police Reform" seems to be the new catch phrase, but I wouldn't say this was a reform. This is Police Impairment. Require body cams at every call, go back to two officers at every call. That's reform.

I'm literally disgusted, the nonsupport from some of our senators is appalling and frightening. It serves to undermine police authority, to hinder their ability to do their job. What will happen when officers stop traffic enforcement, community protection and other aspects of their job for fear of being sued by criminals? Anarchy is what will happen!

If this law passes the House as written, it will remove our Officers' QI, resulting in many frivolous lawsuits against police officers and municipalities. All Officers will be at risk of personal lawsuits, more so the proactive Officers. So, an Officer who goes out and actively seeks out criminals will face a greater likelihood of suits, but all Officers, just from their regular day to day call responses will be at risk as well.

Retirements will increase, proactive patrol will decrease, and high-quality candidates will be in low supply resulting in lower quality candidates getting the job. I know many that already are going to retire, and the ones that aren't yet at retirement age will make their side jobs their full-time ones.

Many police and firefighters have side jobs. They have to, especially here in MA, with the cost of living so high. We should be paying them enough, so they don't have to work two jobs. Now

on top of it all, if this gets passed, they are going to have to risk losing their homes, their freedom, their families-for what?

While there is room for improvement and reform is needed in many areas, this bill as written is not the answer. We need to back our Officers. We need to demand respect for our Officers who put their lives on the line every dam day!

I'm all for holding trainings and education as well as required re-certification but as written this is an attack against our Police Officers and I'm absolutely disgusted. We as tax paying citizens should have been given a say. Our Police should have been given a say.

Put this to the voters of the Commonwealth. Let the majority of the people speak for what we want, and you will see that this law is NOT what is wanted.

We owe our dedicated Officers something more than this ill-conceived and politically driven bill. It certainly does not unite us or show any support. In my opinion the bill's main goal and objective was to attack and discredit law enforcement to appease certain groups.

Please do whatever possible to encourage Governor Baker NOT sign this bill into law. We the people and our incredible Officers should be able to have a vote.



Thank you,
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