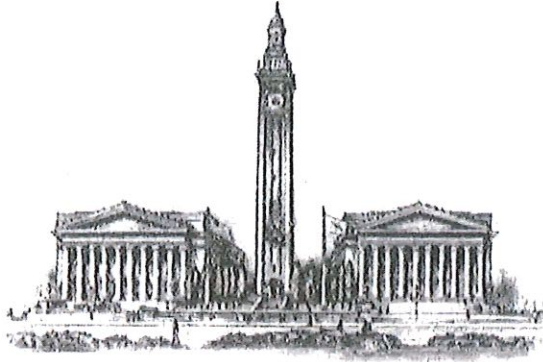


**Cheryl C. Clapprod**  
**Police Commissioner**

**Springfield Police Department**  
130 Pearl Street · P.O. Box 308  
Springfield, MA 01101  
(413) 787-6313



**THE CITY OF**  
**SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS**

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”.

With regard to the process, we seek the opportunity to be part of the criminal justice reform effort. All public employees are entitled to due process and access to a thoughtful and effective appeal mechanism that allows for case by case deliberation on aggrieved acts. Law Enforcement officers should be no exception.

In order to protect this basic right, I would hope the House would proceed through the establishment of a commission to study potential changes and ensure that our cities, towns, public employees and residents are protected from an increase in unnecessary lawsuits. Furthermore, qualified immunity pertains to civil law and does nothing to punish bad police officers who engage in criminal acts.

My peers and I understand the need for civilians to be represented on the board and we support the addition of civilian members, however as a professional certification board, the vast majority of the board should be law enforcement officers. I would hope that Law Enforcement representation on the POSAC Board be increased substantially.

I can tell you that the women and men who report to work at the Springfield Police Department (SPD), willing to place themselves in harms’ way in defense of others, feel that they are unnecessarily under personal and political attack. The rush to pass legislation, without any public participation, will erode public safety. It will significantly increase the difficulties in recruiting and retention of our future police officers causing highly-qualified people to rethink the police career path.

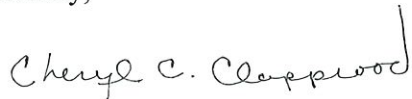
I support Senator John C. Vellis’ contribution. “Qualified immunity does not serve to protect illegal and unethical actions of police officers. Rather, it ensures that a public official, who often must make a split-second decision, does not need to hesitate in a dangerous or lifesaving situation.”

The removal of qualified immunity does harm, but no good. The erosion of qualified immunity would have numerous consequences for all citizens of the Commonwealth, citizens, business owners, court personnel and most other public employees, not simply Law Enforcement. As I am sure you are aware, there is not a single documented instance of qualified immunity shielding of a police officers from wrongful conduct.

Life or death decisions need to be guided by training, perception, common sense consideration for the safety of all, and not in consideration of litigation.

The women and men of the SPD urge you to vote against a rushed and severely flawed bill that would damage public safety, erode citizen credibility on the public process and create a veritable logjam in in an already over-burdened, understaffed and underfunded state court system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cheryl C. Clapprood". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Cheryl C. Clapprood  
Police Commissioner

CCC/pt