

July 17, 2020

The House Judiciary Committee on Ways and Means

RE: Police Reform Bill S.2820

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I am submitting this letter as written testimony in opposition of this bill that was rushed through and passed in the senate. This bill was rushed through and voted on in the very early morning hours. I believe the senate didn't want to take the time to properly see this bill through due to the longer this bill was out there, the more probable someone or the more persons would have come to their senses and voted in opposition of it.

I am a police officer and have been one for twenty-seven years. I consider it to a very prestigious position in the community I serve. At a very young age, I knew what I wanted to be when I grew up. I am grateful that I got my chance to fulfill my childhood dream. I give one hundred percent everyday and sometimes ten hours, worth the work in my eight hour tour.

I am appalled just like every other police officer on the actions of the officers in Minneapolis when dealing with Mr. Floyd. That should have never happened and I am positive I stand with every officer in this country or even the world. I don't want to get into Monday Quarterbacking but anyone there could have intervened, which could have caused the outcome to be totally different. With social media the way it is today, people would rather stand there and video the incident or event rather than stepping in and trying to end it. It is totally sad that this is what society has come to.

Anytime an unfortunate incident occurs, police officers are always judged on their actions. The investigation can take several months or even years to complete, when the officer(s) only had fractions of seconds to respond or take action. This is an unfortunate reality.

Officers go out there everyday to uphold and enforce the laws put in place to make society a safer place for all. Unfortunately, in today's climate, some politicians seem to put the blame on police officers. The general public, some of which can not make a decision on their own, listen to these false accusations and prejudge the police. This has made the job, much tougher. One example, is the several officers in the past few years that were shot and killed while responding to assist or investigate a motor vehicle crash. These Officers were responding with caring for the injured in mind and suddenly, they're taking fire or being assaulted.

It has been alleged that all police officers are racist. There has been study after study done and I haven't heard of any evidence confirming or upholding these accusations. It is alleged that police officers treat or judge a certain person or group differently based on the actions of one. I believe that is what is being done to police officer(s) specifically in Massachusetts are being treated by the actions of those across the country.

I believe the modifications in the bill made by the senate are not necessary and needed. They jumped on the bash wagon, the police are the problem, train. Police Officers deserve and should have due process, which the modification would greatly prohibit. Another is the modification to eliminate Qualified Immunity.

Officers will not receive or qualify for the Qualified Immunity (as currently written) if they are found to have acted improper. This qualified immunity protects police officers from frivolous or false claims. A police officer should not have to go to work having this on his mind. A police officer has enough on his mind already. He/She are going to work to provide for their family.

If this modification is passed, it is going to get more police officers hurt or killed. Officers are going to be afraid to act or second guess themselves, giving the person who they are dealing with added time for an assault. Officers that are near retirement are not going to wait. They will retire immediately just short of their time. Why hang around? After putting in thirty or so years, just to lose it all over a possible false claim.

Also person(s) once interested in pursuing a career in law enforcement, will no longer pursue a career in law enforcement. I have had several teenagers reach out to me who are looking to pursue a career in law enforcement, to ask me my opinion. This is due to all the confusion being broadcast from the media.

In closing, I hope you investigate this issue till exhausted, as it will have severe consequences not just in the law enforcement community, but in every community in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert Kalin