



Burlington Police Department

45 Center Street
Burlington, MA. 01803
Phone (781) 270-1914
Fax (781) 270-1920
www.bpd.org



Michael R Kent
Chief of Police

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Via e-mail to: Testimony.HWMJudiciary@mahouse.gov

Re: Concerns to Senate 2820 as Amended

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 truly appreciate the opportunity to voice my concerns with the proposed Senate bill.

First and foremost, I must emphasize that I am supportive of positive change, essential training, and needed reform within public safety, which has been my chosen profession for over 23 years. All people within Massachusetts need to know that they can count on the police to be a friend, rescuer, and source of help and support in times of crisis and to accomplish this goal we must perpetually strive to improve and remain receptive to the needs of all within our communities.

Regarding the Senate bill my numerous concerns really fall under one over-arching complaint, that being the Senate's refusal to allow police officers to have any voice in the process of creating this proposed bill. Most alarming to me are the proposals to reduce or eliminate provisions of qualified immunity, good faith, due process for officers. If enacted, these changes in the law would not just merely impact police daily operations and procedures. They go much deeper and would also have significant impact on the children, spouses, partners, and friends of police officers statewide. My fear about the Senate bill, as written, is that it would likely invite lawsuits against police that are without merit and others only intended to harass and truly hurt the families of many good and dedicated police officers across the state.

As much as many government officials and elected officials say that they don't believe all police are racists, their actions lately have spoken otherwise. We see this through decisions to defund the police and particularly through this most recent process by the Massachusetts Senate regarding this bill.

My wife and I are very proud to know that we are doing our very best to bring up our children to truly love, appreciate and care for their fellow classmates and playmates within the community and race, religion, gender identity, and sexual preference never are a factor. We feel strongly about this and our vast group of friends are a testament to this ideal. Just imagine how disheartening it is to know that some people in positions to make positive change are labeling you as a racist when you know in your heart that you have always been a defender against

racism. With that, I urge you to make your hearings open to public input so that we may reach the best solutions to move forward with consideration for all.

Respectfully,

Captain Gregory T. Skehan
Burlington Police Department