



MILFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

Michael A. Pighetti
Chief of Police

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July 17, 2020

Via Email To: Testimony.HWMJudiciary@mahouse.gov

Re: Concerns of Senate Bill 2820 as Amended

Dear Chair Aaron Michlewitz and Chair Claire Cronin,

Please accept the following testimony and attachments 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.

On behalf of the dedicated men and women of the Milford Police Department and all Law Enforcement across the Commonwealth, I am compelled to address the provisions of this Bill that if enacted as presented, will most assuredly result in a detrimental impact on our society with unintended consequences. One very important provision addresses Qualified Immunity for police officers. This provision is what allows law enforcement personnel who act in “good faith” in the performance of their duties, a cloak of protection for unintended actions. It is NOT intended, nor does it provide, protection for those who act in an unlawful manner and/or act as a vigilante in exercising their authority. It is unlawful to do so and the law currently provides for prosecutorial measures when this type of behavior occurs. Removing or diminishing the protection of qualified immunity for “all” officers leaves them, their families and our communities open and vulnerable to frivolous unsubstantiated claims of liability for every action an officer takes in executing their duties and responsibilities. Clearly, this is absurd and dysfunctional. Our law enforcement community will cease to perform as we expect and demand.

The law enforcement profession is not opposed to all the changes being proposed. In fact, much of the suggested changes are being embraced by Chiefs of Police, Unions and officers overwhelmingly across the state. Where we disagree, is having no protections for officers who, in the course of their duties, are scrutinized for every action they take and no recourse for decisions made of their performance, by others. Others that are yet to be determined I may add. We ask very much of our police officers who we expect to keep us safe, every day. Please place yourselves in their position. Would you feel secure in doing this job under such circumstances that are currently under consideration? I believe not.

It is imperative that the legislature take a comprehensive review of this matter and act in the best interest of our Commonwealth and not simply as a knee-jerk reaction, to an admitted horrific act, just to be able to say “we did something.” That is reckless and will be extremely difficult to reverse when it is discovered to have been the wrong approach.

All of law enforcement is willing and eager to work cooperatively with all the stakeholders to enact change that is proper and can provide positive meaningful results. Please don't miss this opportunity. We have one chance to get it right. We will most certainly see decades of strife if we, once again, get it wrong.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this extremely important matter.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Michael A. Pighetti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Michael A. Pighetti
Chief of Police

Cc: Representative Brian Murray
Senator Ryan Fattman
Files