

Honorable Representative Michlewitz and Cronin,

I am writing to you to express my concern and opposition of Bill 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 as written. This bill is being fast tracked through the legislature and should be put on hold to allow more time for debate, research and hold public hearings. I served almost 30 years in the military on active duty and have been a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts most of my life. I personally know many police officers who are members of the Massachusetts State Police, Boston Police, City and Town Police Officers, Environmental Police Officers and those in the County Sherriff departments. These are highly educated men and woman, many who are veterans and have received thousands of hours of training. Massachusetts has had very few cases and none that I can remember of officers shooting an unarmed person.

This bill eliminating qualified immunity will place officers in grave danger during life or death situations due to the fear of being personally sued. They will hesitate to draw a firearm when needed placing themselves and others in danger. Officers will be at risk when a suspect or citizen provokes them with a goal of getting in a confrontation to eventually bring suit to the officer.

Eliminating qualified immunity will lead to a mass exodus of officers throughout the Commonwealth from all departments. Parents will not encourage their sons and daughters to serve our communities in law enforcement and recommend they pursue other occupations. This will lead to a police force with little experience and short on staff putting citizen's safety at risk. There is no other municipal employee who will have qualified immunity and singling out a police officer who has a very different job facing danger each shift is grossly unfair.

These officers are the same ones who during the Boston Marathon bombings were hailed as heroes where two lost their lives. During 9/11 they were hailed as heroes running into towers on fire before they filled killing many officers and fire fighters. During early stages of the COID 19 pandemic they were hailed as heroes along with other first responders. Why is there a mob mentality against police now, because of the actions of one disgusting officer whose aggressive actions killed a man in Minneapolis. Officers in the Commonwealth should not be considered to be compared to the fired Officer Derik Chauvin which is what is happening. Please do not put our officers in harm's way by eliminating qualified immunity and treat them with dignity and respect.

Sincerely,

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