



CITY OF FRAMINGHAM

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Dr. Yvonne M. Spicer
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Thatcher W. Kezer III
Chief Operating Officer

July 17, 2020

House Committee on Ways & Means:
Representative Aaron Michlewitz
Aaron.M.Michlewitz@mahouse.gov

Joint Committee on the Judiciary:
Senator James B. Eldridge
James.Eldridge@masenate.gov

Representative Denise C. Garlick
Denise.Garlick@mahouse.gov

Representative Claire D. Cronin
Claire.Cronin@mahouse.gov

Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz
Sonia.Chang-Diaz@masenate.gov

Via Electronic Submission

Representative Michael S. Day
Michael.Day@mahouse.gov

Re: Reform, Shift and Build Act – July 17, 2020 Hearing

On behalf of the City of Framingham, I write today regarding Senate Bill 2820, 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.

Reforms such as the creation of a Police Officer Standards and Accreditation Committee to ensure that those who serve meet statewide standards and earn and maintain professional credentials are sorely needed—such professional standards of training are what our communities and police forces deserve. There must be greater accountability for inappropriate action and inaction—accountability that prevents officers from being hired in another community if they have been stripped of their credentials. Additionally, the arbitration and bargaining processes for addressing police misconduct get in the way of the timely and effective accountability that our communities and forces deserve. There have been numerous arbitration decisions over the years that have prevented municipalities from holding offending officers accountable for misconduct. These decisions are a disservice to both the communities the officers serve and the vast majority of police officers who comply with their obligations and serve their communities with professionalism, honor and integrity.

I similarly applaud the proposals to establish a Commission on the Status of African Americans and a Latinx Commission and to mandate that our police training provide our police forces with an understanding of the history of racism in our country. Setting limits on police use of force is also essential. Here in Framingham, I issued [an executive order](#) jointly with the Police Chief to strengthen the Framingham Police Department's use of force policy, bringing it in line with [the #8Can'tWait reforms](#) that include bans on chokeholds and a duty to report. It is my hope that



CITY OF FRAMINGHAM

these important use of force limitations are adopted across the Commonwealth via the passage of this legislation to protect our citizens' rights, especially people of color.

However, state-level police reform must include reforms to the civil service system. We here in Framingham have been working for nearly 10 years to negotiate a way out of the system with our Superior Officers' and Patrolmen's unions, which we have successfully done. Exiting the system would enable us to attract a wider, more diverse pool of candidates for our police force. It would give us the invaluable opportunity to create a set of hiring and promotional criteria that is most appropriate for our community—so that we can build a department according to our community's antiracist and antiviolent values by finding candidates who uphold similar principles. We are filing a home rule petition to obtain approval from the Legislature to finalize Framingham's departure from civil service, but every community in the Commonwealth should have the opportunity to shape its force in the way that best fits its own unique challenges and opportunities.

These areas are where S.2820 falls short and must be amended in order to create a policing system in our Commonwealth more conducive to providing justice for all.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Yvonne M. Spicer".

Dr. Yvonne M. Spicer, Mayor