



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

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Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Claire Cronin, Chair
Joint Committee on the Judiciary
State House, Room 136
Boston, MA 02133

July 16, 2020

Dear Chair Michlewitz, and Chair Cronin,

I write to you in consideration of S.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*. It is my intention to reaffirm my commitment to supporting the leadership of our colleagues in the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus in their 10-point plan, including their state-focused policies described in points 5-8 of their plan.

The Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus have identified four key policy reforms as their legislative priorities for the Commonwealth. The first concerns the implementation of a statewide Peace Officer's Standards and Training (POST) system as described in H.2146. The second creates an Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity to create diversity plans for all agencies, and establish a peace officer exam advisory board, as described in H.2292. The third establishes a commission to study the systemic presence of institutional racism, as described in H.1440. The fourth adopts limits on police use of force, establishes a duty to intervene amongst police officers, grants broader reporting investigatory and reporting requirements to the Attorney General's office for officer-involved injuries and deaths, requires de-escalation tactics be attempted before using or increasing force, and updates public records requirements for investigations into police misconduct. These proposed policies can be found in HD.5128. I also support the restrictions on qualified immunity highlighted in H.3277. I support all of these policies and I hope that they can be incorporated into a final bill as the House considers police reform.

I was pleased to see the statement last month from Speaker DeLeo and MBLLC Chair Carlos Gonzalez in support of policies that were called a "first step along the long road to ensuring the promise of equal justice for all the citizens of the Commonwealth." It is my hope that, by continuing to work with the Black and Latino Caucus on their priorities, we continue to ensure that promise to all residents of Massachusetts.

Sincerely,

Ruth B. Balser