

To: The Chair of the House Ways and Means,  
Rep. Aaron Michlewitz in cooperation with  
Rep. Claire Cronin,  
Chair of the Joint Committee  
On Judiciary:

Reference:  
Bill # S2820

Title: 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..

My name is Steven Charbonnier and I have been a member of the Boston Police Department for 22 years. I grew up in Dorchester and come from a long line of law enforcement officers. My father Albert F. Charbonnier served 39 years on the Boston Police before retiring in 1996, I also have 2 brothers Albert Jr. and Robert who also are Boston Police officers. My brother Mark Charbonnier served with the Massachusetts State Police and was killed in the line of duty 1994.

I am writing this letter to ask you not to support S2820. My family, friends and colleagues all stand against this bill as presented.

The senate version of this bill as written will seriously undermine public safety by limiting police officer's ability to do their jobs while simultaneously allowing provisions to protect criminals. Furthermore the process employed by the Senate to push this through with such haste without public hearing or input of any kind was extremely undemocratic and non transparent.

Police across the commonwealth support uniform training standards and policies and have been requesting more training for years.

The Senate version of a regulatory board is unacceptable as it strips officers of the due process rights and does away with protections currently set forth in collective bargaining agreements and civil service law. The Senate created a board that is dominated by anti-police groups who have a long detailed record of bias against law enforcement and preconceived punitive motives toward police.

We as police officers ask that we receive the same procedural justice safeguards, as members of the communities we serve demand and enjoy.

The proposed makeup of the oversight board is one sided and biased against law enforcement. It is unlike any of the 160 other regulatory boards across the Commonwealth and as constructed incapable of being fair and impartial.

The Senate has tried to pass a knee jerk reaction to an incident which occurred half a country away that everyone agrees was egregious; the Fraternal Order of Police nationally and in this state quickly condemned it.

Massachusetts officers are among the highest educated and trained in the country.

This bill directly attacks qualified immunity and due process. Qualified immunity does not protect bad officers , it protects good officers from civil lawsuits. We should want our officers to be able to act to protect our communities without fear of being sued at every turn, otherwise why would they put themselves at risk? A large majority of law enforcement officers do the right thing and are good officers, yet there is a real push to end qualified immunity to open good officers up to frivolous lawsuits because of the actions of a few who, by their own actions, would not be covered by qualified immunity anyway. It just doesn't make any sense why we are endangering the livelihood of many for the actions of few.

Changes to qualified immunity would be unnecessary if the legislature adopted a uniform statewide standard and bans unlawful use of force techniques which all police personnel unequivocally support.

If the Senate bill S2820 is passed in its current form the costs to the municipalities and the State will skyrocket from frivolous lawsuits and potentially having a devastating impact on budgets statewide.

My brother, sisters and I were raised to help others, to do good deeds and to protect people who could not protect themselves. My father chose the profession of being a police officer and his 4 boys followed in his footsteps. My brother Mark gave his life for the freedoms we enjoy and for the protection of our State. He is a true hero. As are all men and woman who put on a uniform and badge to help others.

Representatives, again I ask you not to support this bill.

Thank You  
Steven Charbonnier  
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