



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*  
*House of Representatives*  
*State House, Boston, MA 02133-1054*

**ALYSON M. SULLIVAN**  
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Chairman Aaron Michlewitz  
House Committee on Ways & Means  
State House, Room 243  
Boston, MA 02133

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

Re: Senate Bill 2820

Dear Chairman Michlewitz and Chairwoman Cronin,

I am writing to offer testimony 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.

I have heard from a number of constituents regarding Senate Bill 2820. While they have clearly expressed their support in identifying opportunities to improve race relations and to end racism within our Commonwealth and throughout our Nation, they have also expressed serious concerns and objections to several of the changes included in this Bill. I share their commitment to achieving a just society, that naturally welcomes and treats all people fairly and equally, without regard to race. As written this bill would result in additional risks to some groups, particularly to members of law enforcement, most of whom do their work, under great pressures and with extraordinary risks, without advancing what should be the ultimate goal of the Bill.

I am concerned of the collateral and likely unintended consequences of the certain sections of the Bill, for example, reducing and in some cases eliminating the protection of qualified immunity. If included we could lose many well trained, exceptionally performing members of law enforcement and other public safety employees to retirement or resignation. Many people we want to consider law enforcement as a worthy and important profession and as a great career may simply pass. In order to achieve the goals of the Bill we should be showing our support and confidence in those within law enforcement that have been terrific role models, great protectors of our rights, improved community and race relations, and treated people fairly and justly without regard to neighborhood or race.

I don't know of one person who was not horrified and outraged of the cold, callous and criminal conduct of the Minneapolis officers who killed George Floyd. He and anyone else who stood by as George Floyd begged for air should feel the full weight of justice. We know from experiences

and reputation that the despicable actions of these men do not represent that actions of the vast majority of the good and hardworking officers that work every day to protect the citizens of this Commonwealth.

We all welcome changes that will improve race relations and end racism in the Commonwealth is well received. Unfortunately, the far-reaching impacts of this legislation, there may be unintended negative effects on our communities and the people serving to protect these communities. Many of the constituents that have reached out are outraged at the hastily manner in which this legislation was introduced in the Senate. The lack of public comment and ability for stakeholders to express their comments and concerns worries many across our Commonwealth. I believe there is a need for improvement, however I do not agree that a rushed piece of legislation is the correct process to have a fair and long lasting change.

There are other sections of S2820 I believe we can improve upon in order to avoid any negative or unintended consequences, such as due process rights of all officers, civilian intervention when a police officer is acting in the lawful course of their duties, and the inability of the schools to communicate with the school resource officers regarding gang activity. There are several positive changes in S.2820 that will improve race relations in the Commonwealth without diminishing the ability of law enforcement officers to do their jobs.

I welcome the ability to work with Chairman Michlewitz, Chairwoman Cronin and my colleagues in the House to improve race relations and positive community relationships with law enforcement while avoiding any unintended consequences that may occur with how the bill is currently written. I look forward to ending racism throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Thank you, Chairman Michlewitz, Chairwoman Cronin and the committee members for taking the time to read my written testimony and I ask you all to strongly consider taking the time in establishing a strong and meaningful piece of legislation that will have a fair and long lasting change in our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alyson M. Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alyson M. Sullivan  
State Representative  
7<sup>th</sup> Plymouth District  
Abington, East Bridgewater & Whitman