

Representative Aaron Michlewitz
2020
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

July 17,

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

Dear Chair Michlewitz and Chair Cronin:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony relative to 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."

My name is Richard Abate and I have been a police officer for 15 years. There is not a police officer I know that does not think that reform is necessary. However, I have many concerns about a sweeping 71-page bill that seems to have been hastily put together with little input from all stakeholders involved.

As a union member I have concerns about the 3 major issues that I am sure you are receiving from all collective bargaining units in the State: due process, qualified immunity and the composition of the POSAC. I will let the numerous testimonies that I am sure you are receiving on those issues, and the impact they will have on officers and their families, speak for themselves.

I would like to address the one concern I do not hear much about. My feeling is that this bill has a tone to it that is leading the police profession away from positive interactions between the community and the police.

President Obamas task force on 21st century policing spoke directly to transitioning from Warrior to Guardian. To make that transition all stakeholders should be brought to the table for open, respectful, constructive conversation.

I do not think this process took place in crafting this Bill and I respectfully ask that it does not go forward as currently drafted.

Thank you for your consideration,

Richard Abate

