

# Easton Police Department

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July 16, 2020

Representative Aaron Michlewitz  
Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means  
Representative Claire D. Cronin  
Chair of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
Massachusetts House of Representatives  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Re: 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

Dear Representatives Michlewitz and Cronin,

I am writing to you today to express my concern with the Massachusetts police reform bill known as the “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”, as is currently drafted. First, I’d like to make it clear that the Easton police department is not the Minneapolis police department. We never have been and never will be. However, since the murder of George Floyd, members of the law enforcement profession are now being labeled as racists and part of a systematic racist criminal justice system within the United States. Last month, I stood side by side with our police officers during a protest against police brutality in our community. I defended our police officers at Annual Town Meeting after a group of residents called to defund the Easton police department. I resent the fact that the Easton police department and our officers cannot be differentiated with the Minneapolis police department and are now being categorized as one in the same. I’m not suggesting that reform isn’t needed in many police agencies across the country. In fact, my support for Governor Charlie Baker’s police reform bill was made public at our Annual Town Meeting.

We are a professional, fully accredited police department that holds itself to the highest standards. If you are unfamiliar with accreditation, please allow me to provide a brief overview of just what that means. The Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC) oversees the accreditation process which consists of two major components: (1) the establishment of a

body of professional standards for police agencies to meet, and (2) a voluntary assessment process by which agencies can be publicly recognized for meeting those standards considered best practices for the profession. Our policies and procedures, rules and regulations, facilities, etc. are reviewed by MPAC trained assessors every three years. Accreditation is the higher of the two program awards consisting of 382 standards: 257 are mandatory; 69 are optional for an agency our size. The Easton police department has been an accredited agency since 2009 and has successfully achieved re-accreditation three more times since then, as recently 2019. In fact, we were the 35th police agency in Massachusetts to achieve accreditation and to this day only 79 municipalities in Massachusetts have achieved accreditation. Since receiving initial accreditation in 2009, we've been re-accredited three additional times, most recently in 2019.

As Chief of Police, I hold myself and our officers accountable for our conduct and we constantly strive to increase our legitimacy in the eyes of the Easton community. We are not a police department that operates with a "law and order" mindset nor do we partake in police measures that rule by force, rather, we respond to a wide variety of calls for service and in doing so, we treat all people with dignity and respect. We are community caretakers and look to build trust and legitimacy from positive interactions. We seek to achieve this sought-after trust and legitimacy by establishing a positive presence at community events, participating in proactive problem solving, and ensuring that the Easton community has a voice and a seat at the table.

With what is taking place in the Commonwealth and across our nation, I implore you to speak with stakeholders, listen to concerns, and be cognizant towards the proposed changes in this bill. The bill as currently constituted will forever change the face of policing. Now is the time we need our leaders to stand by their law enforcement professionals. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary Sullivan  
Chief of Police