



CITY OF GARDNER POLICE DEPARTMENT



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Dear Chair Aaron Michlewitz and Chair Claire Cronin,

Please accept the following as testimony with regard 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.

During this unprecedented time in history the policing profession is facing its greatest challenges known to our present-day law enforcement officers. These same men and women who have vowed to dedicate themselves and respond to calls within their communities in the face of ever increasing dangers, are being vilified for the improper and at times illicit actions and incidents involving known individual officers. These specific incidents and officers should be dealt with based on their individual merits. Our men and women train, accept and understand the hazards that could be present when they begin this job. Officers are expected to see, hear and respond to events that occur as well as continually train and gain the knowledge and experience that will assist in the best possible results every day. Today the present danger to our profession and individual livelihoods comes from an unexpected source that has commonly supported our efforts, but quickly has seemed to be voiceless. Many specific efforts to effect the results of law enforcement in the future has had a very negative result throughout the profession nationally. Gardner is a small, central Massachusetts community with progressive ideas, an inclusive atmosphere, and in turn a community with a changing demographic due to these notable strengths within our community. We have strong leadership at all levels dedicated to our community with young, smart men and women who are knowledgeable and dedicated to a plan that embraces inclusiveness and equity. It is truly concerning that today I have young officers who question their future in law enforcement and senior officers contemplating a necessity to seek early retirement. Merely having to deliberate leaving a career that becomes who we are, not what we do, is more than concerning.

Law enforcement officers understand there is a time to listen and gain understanding before action occurs. We recognize there are many suggestions for police improvements in Bill 2800 and amended Bill 2820 that are commonly agreed upon throughout law enforcement here in Massachusetts, and are now before you in the House. More importantly, there are items of great concern that need greater understanding as you and your colleagues proceed.

I endorse the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police opinion on Bill 2820 that you've received and ask that the House of Representatives proceed with due diligence and greater understanding as a result of the hearings.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard A. Braks
Chief of Police