



Southeastern Massachusetts Police Chiefs Association



Michael J Myers - President
Fairhaven Police
Christopher Delmonte - 1st Vice President
Bridgewater Police
Brian Clark - 2nd Vice President
Norton Police

Walter Sweeney - Secretary/Treasurer
Hanover Police
Marc Duphily - Sergeant-at-Arms
Carver Police

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

Re: Testimony with regard to SB2820 - 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

Chair Claire Cronin and Chair Aaron Michlewitz,

The Southeastern Massachusetts Police Chiefs Association represents the Police Chiefs of more than 100 cities and towns and 5 counties in Southeastern Massachusetts including Cape Cod and the Islands.

The murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN at the hands of former law enforcement officers recently was disturbing and shocking. We are angry and sickened by this heinous crime and how it was carried out against another human being. Those responsible must be held accountable and we must do everything possible as a nation and a profession to ensure it never happens again. As police leaders, our foremost responsibility is to serve and protect ALL people in our community. We are in the integrity business and this tragedy is at the heart of all we do. We are and should be held to the highest standards of honor and integrity, with the greatest appreciation for the sanctity of human life. We work every day to build trust and earn the confidence of the people we serve, demonstrated by our respect and compassion for ALL.

We have been advocates and facilitators for many of the following initiatives:

- We have adopted the principles established in the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing (2015) including;
 - o 1. Building trust and legitimacy;

- 2. Policy and oversight;
 - 3. Technology and Social Media;
 - 4. Community Policing and Crime Reduction;
 - 5. Training and Education; and
 - 6. Officer Safety and Wellness.
- Many agencies are involved in various stages of Accreditation, a voluntary process of external evaluation in which police departments strive to meet and maintain best practices and excellence in policing. The Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission was first established by the Governor's Executive Order in 1996. Many have achieved full Accreditation or Certification which requires annual review of Use-of-Force and Biased Based Policing policies. As part of that annual review, agencies must also analyze all officer involved use-of-force incidents and public interactions to determine if there are any tendencies or patterns of potential misconduct.
 - We assign a School Resource Officer to support the education of our youth. An officer in school is there to provide guidance to students and teachers, is a positive role model, diverts children from more serious interactions with the criminal justice system, and also stands watch for outside threats.
 - In the past several years, we have sent our personnel to basic and advanced training on fair and impartial policing, implicit bias, leadership, procedural justice, mental health first-aid, and de-escalation tactics.
 - Many of us have organized and supported a Citizens Police Academy to give residents insight and perspective on what, how and why we do what we do. It also gives us the opportunity to bridge gaps in communication, develops mutual understanding with the public we serve, and gives us the ability to form new partnerships to solve problems in our community.
 - We are participating in the FBI National use-of-Force Data Collection registry launched in 2019.
 - We have openly advocated for a fair and comprehensive Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) certification process for police officers.
 - We have advocated for less lethal alternatives to reduce injuries to subjects and officers in the event of a violent confrontation.
 - We continue to seek grants and employ practices that involve mental health and substance abuse clinicians in the field. We have also invested in training our personnel on recognition of people suffering from mental illness.
 - We have adopted wide ranging policies and initiatives to save the lives of people who are struggling with addiction including issuing Narcan to officers.
 - We have been advocating for more comprehensive training facilities to include three full service regional police academies. These would replace multiple temporary sites usually the result of a closed school or state building.

- In the face of limited resources or calls for budget cuts, we have pushed for expanded and contemporary leadership and professional development programs for our personnel.
- We encourage all our personnel and colleagues to continue their formal education, many of whom have achieved Master's level graduate or law degrees.
- We have advocated for more comprehensive background processes and development of higher quality candidate pools through better recruitment.

To be clear, we categorically reject any presumption or stereotype that our members harbor an inherent racial bias or support discriminatory police practices or policies. We take our commitment and responsibility seriously and proactively lead our agencies. We are imperfect human beings who work very hard to maintain the public's confidence through transparency and professionalism. If there was any doubt, let the dedication of our personnel demonstrated over the past four months of a pandemic shine through while every other government institution and social service simply closed their doors.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

On Behalf of our Association,



Michael J. Myers

President

Southeastern Mass Police Chief's Association(SEMPCA)

Chief of Police

Fairhaven Police Department