

Testimony to the CT Police Accountability Task Force
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We are experiencing two major pandemic: one the coronavirus and two, racism. The first is “new” and the latter is ongoing. The murder of George Floyd shone a spotlight on this racial disease that has penetrated the very entity that has been sworn to protect and serve.

I ask that you seriously consider the following:

1. You and your designees should continue ongoing listening sessions. It doesn't stop here. You need to be able to hear from the community the success or failure of the “new rules” that are proposed to be implemented.
2. The demonstration of transparency is absolutely critical!!! People in our community do not trust police officials. The relationship is not there (look at recent incident that occurred on Blue Hills Avenue in Hartford on Monday). Therefore, it is imperative that you give access to the public information relative to: police policies, data concerning the use of force and disciplinary actions, complaints filed against officers, etc.
3. At the local municipal levels, it is unacceptable that the Mayor (or one elected official), makes the selections of who should be on the Citizen Police Review Boards and other entities that examine the conduct of police. This policy needs to be reverse and include more residents, including youth.
4. Partner with community organizations to assist in recruiting diverse residents as candidates for the position of police officer and return the residency requirement.
5. Require post-secondary training for new police officers, as well as ongoing personal and professional development. This training should include: trauma and mental health awareness, diversity and inclusion sensitivity and training, strategic de-escalation techniques, etc.
6. Look at, and incorporate, national best practices, i.e., Camden, NJ.
7. Engage youth in this process!!! They are a value-added, and we need to hear their voices. Let us know if you want an audience with our youth.