



## **State of Connecticut**

**African-American Affairs Commission**

**State Capitol**

**210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509**

**Hartford, CT 06106**

**860-240-8555**

Good Afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, Senator Kissel, Representative Rebimbas, Honorable members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Subira Gordon and I am the legislative Analyst for the African American Affairs Commission. The mission of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC) is to improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut. I am writing today to support SB 1109 [S.B. No. 1109](#) (RAISED) AAC EXCESSIVE USE OF FORCE.

The AAAC supports this bill because it lays the foundation for addressing some of the many issues that communities of color have with their interactions with law enforcement. Section 1 requires police officers to receive cultural competency training as well as training regarding the use of deadly force. This is important because every individual regardless of their background has some kind of implicit biases and this training will allow them to understand what those are and be trained to overcome the biases as well as learn how to successfully interact with all communities in the state. Section 3 requires a plan to recruit and maintain minority police officers to serve in communities that have high percentages of minority residents. Nationally the problem of white police officers policing minority communities has steered a large debate about minority law enforcement recruitment. Here in Connecticut we see many of the larger cities having a small number of minority police officers, 12 percent of the 430 members of

Hartford's police department are black, while the city has a nearly 39 percent of its population being black. In New Britain which has a nearly 37 percent Latino population, but only about 7 percent of its police officers are Hispanic. Nearly 29 percent of Meriden's population is black, but only about 8 percent of its police officers are African-American. The AAAC fully supports measures to recruit more officers of color. This along with training in cultural competency should help to lower the number of negative interactions that some communities face when dealing with the police.

The rest of the bill deals with the use of deadly force by a police officer. The AAAC supports appointing a special independent prosecutor in these instances in order to assist with the investigation and decisions with the judicial process. This ensures that there is a fair and impartial justice proceeding which is be beneficial to the department, the family involved as well as public perception.

Thank you for your time.