Written Testimony Supporting
Proposed House Bill 7285, An Act Concerning Complaints That Allege Misconduct By Law Enforcement Agency Personnel

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

My name Rafael Montes De Oca, and I am resident of Watertown, CT. I am writing you today in support of Proposed House Bill 7285, which intends to ensure compliance with the provisions of section 7-294bb of the Connecticut general statutes concerning the acceptance, processing, and investigation of a complaint from a member of the public relating to alleged misconduct committed by law enforcement agency personnel.

As a resident of this Connecticut and a father of two young boys I am very invested in my community. It is essential for law enforcement agencies to keep themselves accountable to the public in order to build and strengthen their relationship. Government transparency is something that will help both law enforcement agencies as well as the communities they serve.

My hope is that this distinguished committee will keep my words in mind when making a decision on this bill.

Proposed House Bill 7285 recognizes that our police complaint process needs fixing but it does not go far enough to solve the problem. While I support the Proposed House Bill 7285, I also ask this committee to amend this bill so that we finally have accountability. According to a recent survey by the ACLU of Connecticut, some police agencies in the state still make it difficult for members of the public to obtain information regarding complaint forms and processes. This worries me as in some cases this lack of transparency violates state law.

It is clear that we must amend H.B. 7285 to:

1) establish meaningful penalties for law enforcement agencies that do not comply with state complaint acceptance and investigation laws,
2) create a standardized complaint form that is compliant with best practices and translated into all commonly-spoken languages in Connecticut, and
3) require law enforcement agencies to track complaint data and to annually report specific complaint information to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

Please support Bill H.B. 7285. This will encourage faith in the police complaint process and ensure that we are holding our law enforcement agencies accountable.

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