



March 3, 2022

Chairman Horn, Chairman Osten and Members of the Public Safety Committee, I am Brian Anderson. I am a legislative director for Council 4 AFSCME's Public Safety Chapter. We represent 2,000 municipal police officers.

In its present form we are against Senate Bill 161, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PROHIBITION AGAINST HIRING POLICE OFFICERS DISMISSED FOR MALFEASANCE OR WHO RESIGNED OR RETIRED WHILE UNDER INVESTIGATION. This bill allows a municipality, and possibly a police officer, to seek a hearing on an officer being recertified by the Police Officers Standards and Training Council (POST). It also adds even more stringent standards to those mandating that a police officer be barred from ever being recertified as a police officer. We are strongly opposed to making already onerous requirements even more so.

We ask you to consider context. Police accountability and transparency have been hashed over extensively for at least the last seven years by the General Assembly. It has been made easier to fire a police officer. It has been made extremely difficult for an officer who made a mistake, albeit serious, to rehabilitate him or herself. POST has been given even more power to bar officers from employment. A law preventing police contracts from impinging on freedom of information has been passed. Qualified immunity protections for officers have been curtailed. A permanent special prosecutor to prosecute only police officers has been codified. Tools such as body cameras have been approved and are near universal. At what point is there overkill in monitoring, disciplining, or calling into question the overall character of police officers?

Our union and other police unions have been cooperative and have tried to work diplomatically with state legislators, the public, advocates, municipal elected officials and others during the last seven years of intense focus on policing. While we have often disagreed, we have tried to find consensus and not rejected any suggestions out of hand. Our officers have been asked to embrace a second chance

society. Isn't the flip side of that, that officers should also be afforded fair due process when it comes to discipline, especially when it can destroy their career?

If this bill is retooled so that an officer who made a mistake on the job can have a reasonable chance to appeal a firing to POST we would be for it. If it simply offers a hearing with no real chance for an officer to be redeemed then we are against it. If it puts forward an even greater ability to dismiss officers from their career, that takes years to prepare for, then we are against it.

Council 4 does support:

- H.B. No. 5191 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY INTERVENTION BY A POLICE OFFICER WHEN A PERSON SUFFERS A NARCOTICS OVERDOSE
- S.B. No. 141 (RAISED) AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTY FOR THE INTENTIONAL INJURY OF A POLICE ANIMAL OR DOG IN A VOLUNTEER CANINE SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM.

I would be happy to answer any questions.