Major Themes Report
September 2020 Listening Sessions

This report is prepared for the Connecticut Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force
by the Evaluation, Research, and Learning Team

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Introduction

The Connecticut Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force held eight Listening Sessions in September 2020. There were two Listening Sessions every Thursday. After the passing of Public Act 20-1, one of the remaining charges of the Task Force is the ability of Task Force members to form recommendations on “any other police transparency and accountability issue that the Task Force deems appropriate.” The Task Force hosted Listening Sessions with the goal of gathering public input around what topics the Task Force could focus on to work towards police transparency and accountability. Fifty-six participants testified in total. Each participant was given three minutes to share their testimonies. Initially, in-person Listening Sessions were planned for specific locations such as New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, and New London. However, due to COVID-19 and social distancing measures, all the Listening Sessions were conducted virtually on the Zoom platform.

This report summarizes the major themes from the Listening Sessions in response to four questions:

1. What was the participant’s experience with the police?
2. What factors, institutions, and policies affected participant’s experience with the police?
3. What were the impacts of the police interaction?
4. What recommendations did participants suggest for the Task Force?

Method

Transcripts for the eight Listening Sessions were provided by the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy at Central Connecticut State University. There were also written testimonies, but they were not incorporated within the analysis and scope of this report. Everyday Democracy provided staff support to review, code, analyze, and write the major themes report. Two staff initially supported the primary evaluator in coding the first two Listening Sessions and identifying what questions to ask to organize the results. Two additional staff provided additional review, coding support, and the discussion of emerging themes. One of the two staff reviewed and coded six Listening Sessions and provided an additional discussion on emerging themes. The primary evaluator wrote the report with the support of the Evaluation, Research and Learning Team.

Key Findings for Major Themes

1. What was the participant’s experience with the police?

There were more participants who shared secondhand experiences with the police than there were participants who shared firsthand accounts. Both secondhand and firsthand interactions
with the police elicited many feelings that participants expressed during the Listening Sessions, which affected their views towards the police.

Secondhand Experience: National and local incidents of police killings and brutality were mentioned most frequently by participants. These incidents seemed to be on participants’ minds because they referenced them multiple times in their sharing. For some participants, secondhand incidents evoked the question, “What if that happened to me, my family, or my community?” The following were some of their comments:

“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.”

“My primary concern was not being killed on my front steps like Andrew Finch was.”

“But I guess when I read about that boy in Utah, they got shot. It just, it’s always in the back of parents like me.”

“Two of which are Mubarak Soulemane, who was 19 years old and Anthony Vega, who was 18 years old. They’re both are now deceased young people who didn’t even live to see their twenties because of reckless behavior by, state troopers and local Wethersfield police officers.”

“Two separate incidents within a matter of like 30 minutes, where two people in my community were, disrespected and violated by the police.”

“I live two blocks away from when Devon Eaton shot at Stephanie [Washington].”

Another way that secondhand experiences with police were shared was through advocacy. Advocates expressed what individuals in their communities experienced from encounters with the police. See below for some of their comments:

“People with disabilities have experienced...police officers question[ing] if they really have a disability or not. Sometimes they’re being denied interpreters, just flat out.”

“Many of the young people that we serve and that we see being arrested in school are our young people with disabilities and the majority of these young people that we represent are often also youth color.”

Firsthand Experience: Although participants shared a few positive firsthand interactions with the police, a majority of what was shared were negative experiences with the police. One positive experience that a participant described was when a trained police officer helped her safely de-escalate a situation involving her daughter, who is autistic. The negative interactions
that participants described include “aggressive” questioning, being stereotyped, racial profiling, abuse of authority, physical altercations, and loss of life. See below for some of their comments:

“So he [law enforcement] ignores me and asks my son again, “What’s your name,” in a very aggressive manner...I was so shaken that he would even approach my son in such an aggressive manner.”

“And he’s also a type one diabetic, and he has syringes with him at all times. And, he has incidents with police. They always assume that he was a drug addict and sorta treated him that way.”

“And when I asked the officer why he was stopping me, his response was you don’t belong here. Although furious, upset, and taken aback, I was more concerned...for my grandson, not knowing what to expect from the officer who had stopped me with his hand on his holster and over his gun.”

“They falsified reports, they falsified warrants, they lied by omission.”

“Instead of calling me to notify me of the incident or what happened instead, what he [law enforcement] did is interrogated my son for over 20 minutes and then arrested him. He arrested my seven-year-old son in front of his mother.”

“I was assaulted and dragged out of my car by two New Haven police officers due to a traffic stop.”

“My son was calm, never a threat, but not complying with direction to leave the shower when he was first excessively pepper-sprayed, and then stomped in the face by ex-lieutenant Carlos Padro. My beautiful son was left unconscious and dying, if not already dead.”

**Feelings towards the police:** While a few participants expressed respect, appreciation, and support for law enforcement including participants who shared a negative police interaction, the secondhand and firsthand interactions with police resulted in more unfavorable feelings towards the police. These feelings included fears, distrust, disrespect, feeling criminalized and the inability to secure accountability or justice. These feelings were primarily expressed by individuals and advocates for communities of color, disabilities, and mental health. The following is a sample of what participants shared:
“Why should I fear if my 21 and 23-year-old son walking in public, just because of the color of your skin... I mean, how does a mother feel when she has to say these words?”

“We know currently the police...respond when wellness checks are needed within our communities. But how well can I be when someone with a loaded weapon on their hip who was authorized to use lethal force and kill me if they perceive me as a threat....”

“As parents, we have a lot of fear about the police and our fear is that the police do not have adequate training, or knowledge about autism. I know the police have a lot going on, but we're really fearful that our kids could be out in the community. A police officer an officer wouldn't know how to interact with them.”

“How is an arresting officer to know that the person they are interacting with has a disability or in this case suffers from schizophrenia?”

“I have talked to countless incarcerated young people in our conversations, many expressed, a lack of trust in the system that displays abuse of authority.”

“The second one is it really deals with the lack of trust between the police and law enforcement and the community... I looked at Monday's video that happened at Blue Hills Avenue. You know, there's a lack of trust. I talked to people in the community and our staff talked to people in the community. And we are hearing from residents that we don't even call the police anymore.”

“When you...politely ask a question, you're not given a response oftentimes...I get that officers have to do their jobs. We understand that...we have to have accountability, but there must be accountability and respect that's mutual.”

“I don't feel every officer, belongs in our community. They have no respect for us. They don't want to understand us.”

“There are decent people that live in our neighborhoods...We are not all criminals that live here.”

“Despite well-meaning people at every turn, no one has the authority to interrogate Mr. Fuchs and his staff. No one has the authority to conduct an independent objective investigation into Abe's death.”

**Law Enforcement Perspectives:** There were two self-identified law enforcement officers who are currently active on the force and testified. Three common themes they shared were concerns about officer safety, removing the “bad” police, and wanting to engage the community more. Concerns about officer safety pertained to the application of the Police Accountability Bill and legislation the Task Force is working on. They expressed that the
legislation will potentially restrict or change the job of police officers to the degree that it would decrease officer and public safety. See below for some of their comments:

“I feel that the legislation and some of the provisions that you’d want to make recommendations about are taking my ability not only to protect myself, let’s leave that alone, but you’re taking my ability away from protecting the children in my community.”

“Something the task force and maybe our state legislators should be looking towards is how can we streamline and come up with a better process, not to hire the bad apples.”

“I would like to see more of...community building and trust building... I want to be part of my community...And I will always stand on the side of the people who want to come together and rebuild the trust together and build a community together growing into mutual accountability and responsibility.”

In addition, highlighting some of the examples that the two law enforcement officers shared for engaging the community could illuminate how community members and police diverge in their conceptualizations of community engagement. Different understandings of community engagement between police and community members are significant because they could result in negative and even fatal encounters with civilians. See below for their comments:

“I bring 600 presents to the housing projects at Christmas time, the FOP [Fraternal Order of Police] gives to me to distribute. These are kids that would never have a Christmas, very important. Burgers and dogs for summer picnics. We try to do all of these things.”

“Most of the time I stopped cars to make contacts, to get to know the people that are there. If there is a violation, that’s going to be evaluation. Most of the time I give verbal warning written warning, but I get to know the people.”

2. What factors, institutions, and policies affected participant’s experience with the police?

Participants identified additional factors, institutions, and policies that influenced their or their community’s experience with the police. Race was the most notable factor that participants identified as well as economic inequalities across Connecticut towns and cities. Three institutions and factors that participants identified as having a significant effect on their experience with the police were law enforcement itself, schools, and mental health. Of the three, law enforcement was the most widely discussed institution. The Connecticut Police Accountability Bill that was passed in July 2020 was also discussed frequently by participants. The differing perspectives expressed reveal how participants viewed police accountability.
Factors: Race

Race was a salient factor in how participants described their interactions with the police. This included racial patterns of traffic and pedestrian stops, stereotyping, the disproportionate number of Black/African and Hispanic/Latinx individuals and youth who are impacted at “every point of the justice system,” and the racism embedded in law enforcement as an institution. There were some participants who self-identified as white, who acknowledged the privilege they have when engaging with police. See below for their comments:

“Have you seen what happens to black people when they question the police officer? They escalate.”

“I really have to state that in the immigrant community...especially those of us from the Caribbean, there is a relationship with the police that begins fine when you just come. But once you move into...the American system..., then you find that that relationship changes and people get afraid and concerned...even walking on the streets becomes a problem.”

“I am white, and my son is white. And with that skin color comes an unspoken privilege.”

Factors: Economic Inequalities

Participants also identified economic disparities that have accumulated over time across towns and cities that influence how law enforcement polices under-resourced areas. See below for their comments:

“A lot of the youth in the communities... would rather have Connecticut invest in a basketball court or provide their schools with resources that their wealthier peers have. They’d like mentors and real opportunities to make legal money, not invest money in SWAT gear and other items. They never once said they need more police.”

“There are obvious reasons that our community is in the shape that it is, it’s generational, right? Because wherever there is poverty, you’re going to have issues with crime...So, the whole system needs to change, and I think officers need to be educated when they come into our community that listen, people don’t choose to live this way, and kind of educate them as to why conditions are the way they are, and not to treat everyone like criminals.”

Institutions: Law Enforcement

Participants expressed that police have too many jobs, especially when intervening during mental and/or behavioral health crises. Participants observed that police seemed to demonstrate a lack of knowledge and skills when interacting with individuals with disability, mental and behavioral health needs or a victim of sexual assault. This lack of knowledge and skills resulted in police misinterpreting the actions of the individual. Misinterpreting actions, therefore, unnecessarily escalated the situation resulting in unfortunate outcomes for the individual and police. The following is a sample of what participants shared:
“We have given police officers a job that is just not something that the vast majority of them have the skillset for, and that’s not really their fault.”

“No amount of training is going to prepare officers to do the job that is really designed for mental health clinicians.”

“And often when a deaf or hard of hearing person wants to say something and is having difficulty understanding the police officer, it creates more issues. And often for deaf blind persons, they also require a lot of physical touch because they’re not able to not only hear you, but they’re also not able to see you.”

“The symptoms of trauma look very much like the cues of deception, cues law enforcement are taught to look for in interviews and interrogations. And, so reading trauma responses incorrectly really harms a sexual assault victim.”

Participants also identified an “authority bias” within law enforcement. Some examples that participants named were police investigating themselves when a police misconduct incident occurs, police not being held to the same standards as civilians, and the words and documentation from police being valued as more credible than a civilian’s words. See below for one participant’s comment:

“You cannot have the police department of the person accused of misconduct doing the internal affairs investigation. That makes absolutely no sense. Of course, there’s going to be bias.”

Lastly, participants noted that police interactions varied by town and city. A few participants shared about how they proactively reached out to their local police departments, as in the case with Mubarak Soulemane which is shown below, Soulemane was shot and killed by the state police, who did not know about his condition. In addition, participants of color also described being treated differently depending on what town or city they are in even if they lived there.

“If there had been de-escalation at the scene of the shooting, there would be ample time to get some information...about Mubarak, particularly from the Norwalk police department.”

“We saw at the incident at the end of this school year, other towns’ police departments came into our town to handle a matter. So, it doesn’t matter what my connection and my relationship is with my town. I’m still impacted by other police departments.”
Institutions: Schools Participants identified issues of increased police or “hardening” of schools as ineffective ways to improve the quality and safety of the learning environment. Participants noted that for Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx youth, their first interactions with the police happen outside of schools. Increasing police presence and “hardening” schools exacerbated existing negative interactions with the police with new ones such as increased school arrests. See below for their comments:

“And we’ve seen in the research that even if an officer is placed inside of a school to build those relationships, just having that officer in the school makes it more likely that students, especially Black and Brown students will be arrested and have a negative interaction with that officer.”

“So she wasn’t expelled, her charges were reduced, but that’s just an example of an instance where police presence in school with a student with a disability can lead to an unnecessary arrest or criminalization of our youth, particularly youth of color.”

Institutions: Mental Health Participants shared that misinformation, severely underfunded community mental and behavioral health services, and policy contribute to negative or increased police interactions. One participant suggested that a “comprehensive change” needs to occur for how society and police respond to people experiencing mental and behavioral health distress. See below for some of their comments:

“We cannot figure out how to improve outcomes for people with mental health and substance abuse issues who come into contact with law enforcement without understanding that the services that are available are vastly under invested in underfunded.”

“Fifty years of failed mental health policy placed law enforcement on the frontlines of mental health crisis response turning jails and prisons into the new asylums.”

Participants also shared how the interaction between practices in these institutions and factors in participant’s lives could result in more adverse police interactions. For example, one participant suggested that addressing and resourcing the mental health needs of youth could be a better alternative to school safety than increasing police presence. Similarly, if mental health services were more heavily invested in, police may not have to be the first responders to address a mental and behavioral health crisis. Another participant noted that people with mental health and substance abuse issues disproportionately come into contact with the police because of housing insecurity, which is related to race and economic inequalities.
**Policy: Police Accountability Bill** The policy that was most discussed during the Listening Sessions was the Police Accountability Bill. There were more participants who expressed support of the bill, citing that passing the bill and ending qualified immunity was a step in the right direction towards greater police accountability. In addition, the bill represented that the state heard and acted upon community concerns about the lack of police accountability. At the same time, there were participants who expressed that they did not support the bill. They voiced concerns that the bill would result in police leaving the force and increased lawsuits against police officers. The discussion generated about the Police Accountability Bill suggested there could be misinformation about the application of the bill in the public and further discussion may be beneficial among community members, law enforcement, and legislators.

“The biggest thing we want to say, we want to definitely support the police accountability bill, because we would like to know that our concerns are considered.”

“If officers want to develop relationships with communities, we have to start by increasing trust by ensuring that police are held to the same standard as other community members. This is why I am in full support of ending qualified immunity.”

“First under the police accountability act...there will be an overwhelming number of frivolous lawsuits will, which will indeed inundate our court systems.”

“Finally, qualified immunity...Threats of mass resignation by officers, frankly, is a time warned strategy and overblown. Mass findings of lawsuits by citizens and in a frivolous manner is [not] born out historically...”

3. What were the impacts of the police interaction?

**Loss of Life:** Three participants shared that they had lost a family member or represented a family who lost a family member due to police shooting or negligence in investigating. This does not include the many names of victims both nationally and locally that were mentioned by participants.

**Racial Trauma:** The feelings towards police expressed by participants demonstrated that Black/African Americans and Hispanic/Latinx communities experienced racial trauma after repeated negative interactions with law enforcement. See below for their comments:
Advocates noted that racial trauma disproportionately affected youth of color and youth of color with disabilities. The impacts described were widened achievement gaps and lower graduation rates, which increased the school-to-prison pipeline. In addition, some participants noted that their children witnessed their parents or relatives being arrested, physically harmed, or racially profiled at a traffic stop, which demonstrated the ripple effect of one police incident within a family or community.

**Resources:** Some participants noted spending personal resources to seek police accountability or time to rectify a falsified police report, wrongful conviction, or jail records. Interacting with the police also resulted in being involved with other parts of the legal and jail system, which required additional time and resources to navigate them. See below for some of their comments:

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“I am black, my husband is black, and I am also a mother to a black son. I’ve been told too many stories by black men about how they’ve been treated in Connecticut and I refuse for my son and my husband to be included to that list.”

“I oftentimes question when I go out...it passes my mind, I’m Hispanic. And you can very quickly tell that I am Hispanic by just running my plate and you get my license...and I’m oftentimes...questioned as to what I’m doing in a particular neighborhood.”

“So much of what’s happening is now the result of generations, of loss of power and trauma suffered by Black people and people of color. And we really need to acknowledge and address this.”

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4. **What recommendations did participants have for the task force?**

Participants shared recommendations in two main areas: law enforcement and community engagement. With law enforcement, the three most mentioned recommendations were additional training, accountability for police misconduct and changing or adding personnel to the police force.
**Training:** The testimonies overwhelmingly suggested a consensus in recommending additional training for law enforcement. In particular, training for law enforcement was highlighted in two areas: race and mental health. In training in the area of race, participants suggested increasing education on systemic racism, institutional bias, understanding the racist history of policing and racial trauma from police interactions. In addition, improving cross-racial interactions, especially in demonstrating respect towards Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx communities was emphasized. Some of the participants’ comments included:

“I believe that starts with learning the history of policing and educating our officers on the importance of why black people do not trust police...If you don’t know how to communicate with people of color, you don’t need to be a police officer.”

“I just think they need...to have better diversity training.”

“I’m here to talk about this cultural sensitivity training...around look at diversity and especially look at all the cultures that are represented in Blackness in Connecticut...Also more important cultural competency and humility training...which should be on-going...And I think this important aspect of looking at systemic racism has to be part of the training...the kind of racism that criminalizes Black and Brown people in the United States by the police.”

In the area of mental health, participants recommended increasing law enforcement knowledge, awareness, and understanding of mental health and disability issues such as autism and “invisible disabilities.” Along with the increase in knowledge, learning skills to de-escalate situations through non-violent tactics with persons with mental health and/or disabilities was suggested. Participants also emphasized wanting police to treat persons with disabilities with more respect and empathy. One participant also recommended improving law enforcement engagement with persons who are houseless, a population that may have increased mental or behavioral needs. Some participants’ comments included:

“If that training that is up on your website is an example of the training that cops are getting now, I am not surprised that we’re continuing to have the problems that we have because looking at that...the information is old...outdated, and it contains a lot of assumptions about what people who either have a mental health condition, who use drugs, who have various diagnoses are like, and that is just not the reality of our lives and our experiences.”

“There is absolutely a place for better training for police officers around understanding and recognizing symptoms of mental health and substance abuse issues as well as protocols and policies for how to respond when police are the first to arrive on the scene and figuring out how to either call in the mental health partners that they’ve formed or to respond in ways that are appropriate.”
Overall recommendations for increased training for law enforcement included continuous testing on implicit and explicit bias and mandatory-state wide training for all police departments. One participant also recommended law enforcement training on victim-centered trauma, especially for victims of sexual assault.

“Police officers are asked to put themselves in harm’s way every day, often with very little training beyond the academy. And given all the different kinds of training that police officers should regularly receive including crisis intervention training, instruction in the disease of addition, training on implicit bias and cultural responsiveness, procedural justice, effective social interaction, and of course, use of force and tactical skills...We need to radically rethink this and have officer’s training more like four to eight hours per week.”

“I hope one thing that this task force will bring away is to mandatory training because that’s the only way we’re going to get it.”

Although there was an overwhelming consensus on increasing training and the quality of training for law enforcement, there were a few participants who voiced the limitations of training. They suggested looking into systemic and structural changes instead of incremental changes. Furthermore, two participants mentioned including correctional officers and prosecutors in all law enforcement training recommendations, which suggest these concerns extend beyond law enforcement and into other systems in criminal justice. A few comments that illustrated this were:

“Police were designed, as we already know, to uphold a white supremacy social order...They do not, they’re not designed to protect Black and Brown communities. They protections that are extended to the white communities are not extended to Black and Brown communities. It’s not even a matter of a bad apple or a bad person. It’s a bad system. It’s an institution that was designed not to protect Black and Brown communities.”

“I’m an abolitionist. And I don’t believe in policing. I also don’t think that your job as a task force can be complete if you don’t come up with a legislative process for communities to follow, to disarm, to fund divest from policing. It’s very important to acknowledge that, that there are ways in communities and cultures that live without police.”
Accountability: Independent Investigations  Police Civilian Review Boards, independent monitors, and independent investigators were mentioned as potential structures or positions that could ensure independent investigations. Specific suggestions about independent investigations included “the inspector general being housed away from the police,” mandating Police Civilian Review Boards across the state, and incentivizing or providing training or resources for towns to institute Police Civilian Review Boards. See below for their suggestions:

“I think all groups should have in place mechanisms that will allow for external as well as internal reviews with public disclosure of those reviews, especially for tax based service organizations.”

“Please include a method for civilians, victims and victims, families like my own to report wrongdoing to an independent review board.”

“What I would like to see this committee do is to try to figure out a way where in order, the civilian review board is system is one that is key, in effectuating the goal of more police accountability so the bad apples can be taken out of police departments.”

Accountability: Police Misconduct  Participants expressed wanting greater accountability for police misconduct. Suggestions included condemning inappropriate police actions, improved processes in hiring and firing “bad apple” police, improved processes in reporting police misconduct, harsher or more appropriate disciplinary actions, and prosecuting officers who killed civilians. See below for their recommendations:

“Police departments should establish an early warning system to identify officers who are involved in an inordinate number of incidents that include the use of inappropriate that is specific observable force against citizens. Such incidents should be investigated force against citizens. And if verified, the involved officers should be charged and disciplined by invoking or suspending their certifications.

“We must hold the police force accountability for respecting people with disabilities, all kinds of disabilities.”

“I can speak from private life, corporate life, you fire...you got rid of them. You didn’t want those people in your organization because they poisoned everything around them.”

Personnel in the Police Force:  Participants also brought up having a police force that represented the communities they served. In particular, race, gender, and similar lived experiences were the primary kinds of representations mentioned. In addition, there were three participants who suggested requiring police to reside in the communities and neighborhoods they served. See below for their suggestions:
Advocates for mental health and people with disabilities recommended having certified interpreters, translators, and an ADA Accommodation Coordinator in all police departments. An advocate for victims of sexual assault recommended including a sexual assault counselor and a detective with expertise in domestic and sexual assault as well. Two participants recommended standardizing the data that police collect and making that data accessible to the public.

**Community Engagement:** In addition to recommendations for law enforcement, the second category that participants gave suggestions for was in community engagement. In general, participants expressed wanting opportunities for more authentic community engagement with law enforcement that included having community needs be heard and improving the way that police approach community engagement. Participants also suggested that if there are future community engagement activities, to include individuals from communities most impacted by the police such as Black and Brown women, youth of color, and youth with autism. In addition, participants suggested collaborating with community services in addressing situations that police may face. The following is a sample of their recommendations:

“We need officers who look like us, we need to think about having officers who not only look like us, but live within our areas, and what that impact could look like.”

“Another critical area to consider for change is adopting a regulation that would require a certain percentage of police department employees to live within the community they serve.”

“The thing is the residents do not have a safe place anywhere to share their feelings without being coerced into loving police.”

“I think it takes more than forum... it takes real conversation and meeting them where they are...”

“It’s ultimately going to have to come back to a conversation between two groups of people who disagree to finding common ground.”

“It would be beneficial to have police representatives in the public developing relationships with families like mine and creating opportunities for discussion and education.”

“I think if you do not involve people who are the most marginalized, who are most likely to be impacted by whatever recommendations you make, your recommendations are not going to be as strong as they could be.”

“Police departments need to be partnering with community organizations to assist in the recruiting process of diverse candidates.”

“Part of the solution for that might be to engage and leverage other community resources...police shouldn’t be handling most civil matters.”
Discussion of Key Findings

Based on the Listening Session testimonies, the secondhand and firsthand experiences described by participants suggest that adverse police interactions for individuals from Black/African American and Hispanic/Latinx communities and individuals with disabilities and mental health issues are fairly pervasive. The feelings that come from either firsthand or secondhand experiences exacerbate the relationship between police and individuals in these communities. These feelings also demonstrate that previous or present attempts towards greater police transparency and accountability have not been adequate for these individuals and communities.

In addition, there was a minority of participants who expressed different perspectives from what was generally shared in the Listening Sessions. These dissenting views were most evident in the testimonies of the two law enforcement officers and participants who expressed not supporting the Police Accountability Bill. Although their viewpoints were in the minority, understanding their perspectives and having opportunities to hear and exchange perspectives may be beneficial given the heightened polarization on these matters.

As for recommendations, the general consensus, including the two law enforcement representatives who testified, was on improving law enforcement training to mitigate and prevent adverse interactions between police and community members. In addition, participants recommended independent and improved processes for investigations of police misconduct. Greater recourse for victims of police misconduct is needed if and when negative police interactions occur.

Areas for Further Consideration

**Efficacy of Training:** While law enforcement training could be a first step in increasing police transparency and accountability, further discussion may be needed in determining the benefits and limitations of increased training as expressed by a few participants. One question that emerged from this analysis is whether law enforcement training would sufficiently address the experiences and feelings that individuals from communities, who are disproportionately affected by police encounters, shared in these Listening Sessions. In addition, taking into consideration that factors and institutions outside of law enforcement play a role in affecting adverse outcomes of police interactions, as highlighted in this report, may also limit the impact of law enforcement training on greater transparency and accountability.

**Authentic Community Engagement through Dialogues:** Dialogues between law enforcement and community members could be another way to address community engagement. The diverging opinions expressed about the Police Accountability Bill, the role of the police in communities, and the various interpretations of what community engagement means between law enforcement and community members could be factors that support initiating dialogues. These dialogues may provide opportunities to improve relationships between community members and police as well as among community members who have different experiences with the police. Dialogues could also help include community voice in decision-making processes about police transparency and accountability.