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Hello, I just wanted to say thank you to everyone who came out to discuss police transparency and accountability.

My name is Hannah Odom, I am a senior at the University of New Haven and an intern for the Tow Youth Justice Institute.

I am here to give my perspective, to the Police and Transparency Accountability Task Force, on police training when dealing with kids

Lack of training:

First, I would like to talk about the lack of police training there is for dealing with kids. Of the twenty-eight training hours, current Connecticut police officers are mandated to complete yearly, only one of them is dedicated to “handling Juveniles.” Through my studies as well as my personal opinion, this is not enough. Dealing with a juvenile is much different than dealing with an adult. It is said that a child's brain is not fully developed until about twenty-five. Juveniles are not, as one of my professors (Dr. Carbone) once said, “mini-adults” and should not be treated as such.

The use of police SROs in schools:

Another topic that needs to be addressed is the use of SROs or school resource officers in schools. Rather than do what they were originally meant to do, protect schools and the people in them from outside forces, SROs often do more harm than good and make students feel unsafe and threatened. SROs are sworn-in law enforcement officers; they carry all the same equipment as police do. In a place that is supposed to be nurturing and meant for learning; this can make students feel nervous and uneasy. Also, SROs do not have the necessary training needed to properly deal with a misbehaving student. When a student misbehaves, they use the same techniques and methods used on adults. With the increase in technology and cameras, we can see this firsthand. There are countless videos, on YouTube, of SROs using overly aggressive techniques to deal with these misbehaving students including body slamming, choking, and yelling in student's faces. This can be very traumatizing for students, especially young kids.

Thank you, Police Accountability Task Force and listeners, for hearing my perspective on the need for police training when dealing with kids. To reiterate, there are not enough required training hours for police and dealing with kids. This is especially prominent in schools where SROs do not have the necessary training for handling a child. SROs will use overly aggressive techniques that should not be used in schools or on children. For someone who is meant to be keeping these students safe, students are afraid of them and make them nervous. Along with the police accountability bill, we must take more action to ensure that police are properly trained on how to deal with kids both in and outside of the classroom. We need to increase the number of yearly hours of training required on handling juveniles. The police also need to have a better

understanding of the social and emotional development of a juvenile to ensure they are treated properly.