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Acceptance, Not Tolerance; Policing in the Disabled Community

Greetings and Salutations to The Police Transparency and Accountability Task Force. It is an honor to speak to you all as it pertains to this matter. Thank you for appreciating and listening to the voice of the youth. My name is Simone Amor Robinson. I am 12 years old, and I reside in East Hartford, Connecticut. I am a two-time oratorical competition winner, and I am a public speaker. I am also a proud scholar at Jumoke Academy Honors at The Hartford Conservatory. I am in favor of the Police Transparency Act.

There have been multiple cases where police officers were put in a position where they had to defend themselves, such as Tryinde Mason-Thompson, Michael Gregory, etc. These are both situations where the police could have used help from a social worker. I believe that the police force and social workers can respond to calls for people with mental illnesses together. I recommend that people with mental and neurological illnesses that make it harder for them to comprehend their surroundings or current situation well (such as Paranoid Schizophrenia, OCD, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Autism, Anxiety, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, etc.) receive the behavioral and/or medicinal treatment that they need beforehand and that it is more accessible. However, police officers do not need to respond with violence immediately in situations where they are not in any danger. Like Elijah McClain, who was tasered, placed in a chokehold, injected with 500 milligrams of ketamine, and went into cardiac arrest, and died hours later. And Jeremy Mcdole, who was shot in the middle of the street for doing nothing. The police force needs to reevaluate who they are serving; the people or themselves. More training on how to handle and serve the disabled community is necessary. Furthermore, I recommend that the Uniform Duties to Disabled Persons Act is looked into. It ensures that police officers make an active effort to identify physically and/or mentally disabled people and interact with them accordingly.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to the voice of the youth, we appreciate it. This is a topic that I am very passionate about, and I am beyond thankful and grateful for this opportunity. Please let me know if there is ever an opportunity for my voice to be heard in front of such an honorable group of people. Thank you all so much again, and wherever you are, I hope you are staying safe and healthy.