

Senator Tran: Massachusetts police reform bill circumvented legislative process, void of any public hearings

The following was posted by Massachusetts **Senator Dean A. Tran** on his Facebook page:

S2800, An Act to reform police standards and shift resources to build a more equitable, fair, and just commonwealth that values Black lives and communities of color.

This catchy titled, convoluted, and behemoth of a bill, 72 pages long, was released to the Ways and Means Committee members on Sunday night with a deadline of Monday, 10am to cast a vote. Then a Tuesday, 4pm deadline to file amendments. This bill circumvented the legislative process, that is, bypass the Joint Committee, void of any public hearings, and considered no dialogue with pertinent parties. Further, this bill is vastly different from the proposed Governor's bill which, at the minimum, contained clarity and input from various groups.

Notwithstanding some agreeable components of the bill such as establishing a commission on the status of African Americans, prohibits racial profiling, creates a police training committee, requires officers to be certified every 3 years, requires "no-knock" warrant be issued by a judge, and removing some of the unnecessary tactics used in law enforcement, the bill also includes the following:

- requires public hearings for any purchase of military-grade equipment

- prohibits schools from cooperating with law enforcement agencies
- prohibits law enforcement officer from using a chokehold for self-defense
- allow individuals to expunge more than 1 charges before their 21st birthday
- prohibits the use of biometric surveillance
- removes the requirement for a school resource officer
- requires law enforcement training to include the history of slavery, lynching, racist legal institutions and racism in the United States
- authorizes AG to bring civil lawsuits against officers
- allows a person to bring civil lawsuits against officers
- removes monetary claims from qualified immunity
- creates a licensing board with no law enforcement representation

The filing of the bill resulted in 145 amendments. I filed the following:

- chokehold in self-defense: to allow officers to defend themselves.
- teaching of the history of racism: if law enforcement is mandated to have this training, legislators should as well.
- collective bargaining: this bill shall not impact the current municipal and state contracts.
- grant programs for municipalities: provide funding for municipalities to implement the bill.
- qualified immunity: removes the section in the bill that impedes on qualified immunity. This section allows civil lawsuits against officers, jeopardizing the public safety service they provide to you.

This bill does not take into account the input from pertinent organizations and will result in resentment and an unsafe environment for everyone. The process in which this bill undertook is troublesome with no public hearings for communities of color and law enforcement to take part. The

lack of transparency is extremely disturbing. By no means, does this bill addresses social injustice and inequities rather it is a direct attack on all law enforcement officers, their livelihood, and families. Further, the bill creates layers of bureaucracy and costing the taxpayers over \$5 million dollars annually.

Democracy is about working together and getting things done right. This bill should be driven by collaboration and not by politics. We have been able to delay this bill to allow public input. I look forward to continuing to work closely on this bill through the weekend to make sure that it is an acceptable bill for everyone.