



BLM RI PAC POSITION: OPPOSE

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The Honorable Chairman Robert E. Craven Sr.
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

Dear Chair Craven Sr. and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am respectfully giving testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 2096. While BLM RI PAC acknowledges the Senate's recent passage of a reformed version of LEOBOR after three years of advocacy, it is crucial to recognize that many activists, elected officials, community organizations, and, most importantly, individuals affected by police brutality remain dissatisfied with the significant flaws in LEOBOR. Our ongoing discussions about police brutality must emphasize that the persistent issue facing our country is the disproportionate victimization of people of color and low-income individuals by law enforcement. LEOBOR, as it stands, serves as a system that limits accountability and transparency after harm has already been inflicted. Specifically, the proposed legislation falls short in addressing the necessary measures to prevent incidents like Officer Dolan's delayed termination following the shooting of a teenager in a fit of road rage. Moreover, cases like those of Officer Jeann Lugo and Officer Hanley, facing extended delays in LEOBOR trials, highlight the urgency of comprehensive reform. BLM RI PAC strongly believes that, in line with the broader criminal justice reform efforts across the nation, police chiefs should have the authority to terminate officers when concerns about public safety arise. The inability to promptly fire an officer, as in the case of Officer Dolan, should be a matter of concern for all.

Furthermore, the composition of the panel overseeing LEOBOR proceedings remains problematic. Allowing law enforcement officials to discipline their peers perpetuates a lack of public trust. While some argue that police can be trusted with this responsibility, historical disappointments in accountability for victims of police brutality demonstrate otherwise. In response to concerns about repealing LEOBOR, we propose that the legislature amends any repeal bill to explicitly state that new accountability processes cannot be subject to union negotiation through contracts. Instead, the authority should be vested in the chief of police to ensure a fair and impartial process. As you deliberate on this legislation, we urge you to consider these critical points. We are more than willing to address any questions you may have and remain committed to achieving a fair and just system that prioritizes accountability, transparency, and the safety of our communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Harrison Tuttle
President, Black Lives Matter RI PAC

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The Black Lives Matter Rhode Island PAC (BLM RI PAC) is a political action committee created by young people of color in Rhode Island with the belief that representation is the best way for the government to serve the interests of its people. Right now, people of color are underrepresented across the state. BLM RI PAC seeks to change this by training, recruiting, supporting, and electing young people and people of color to offices up and down the ballot.